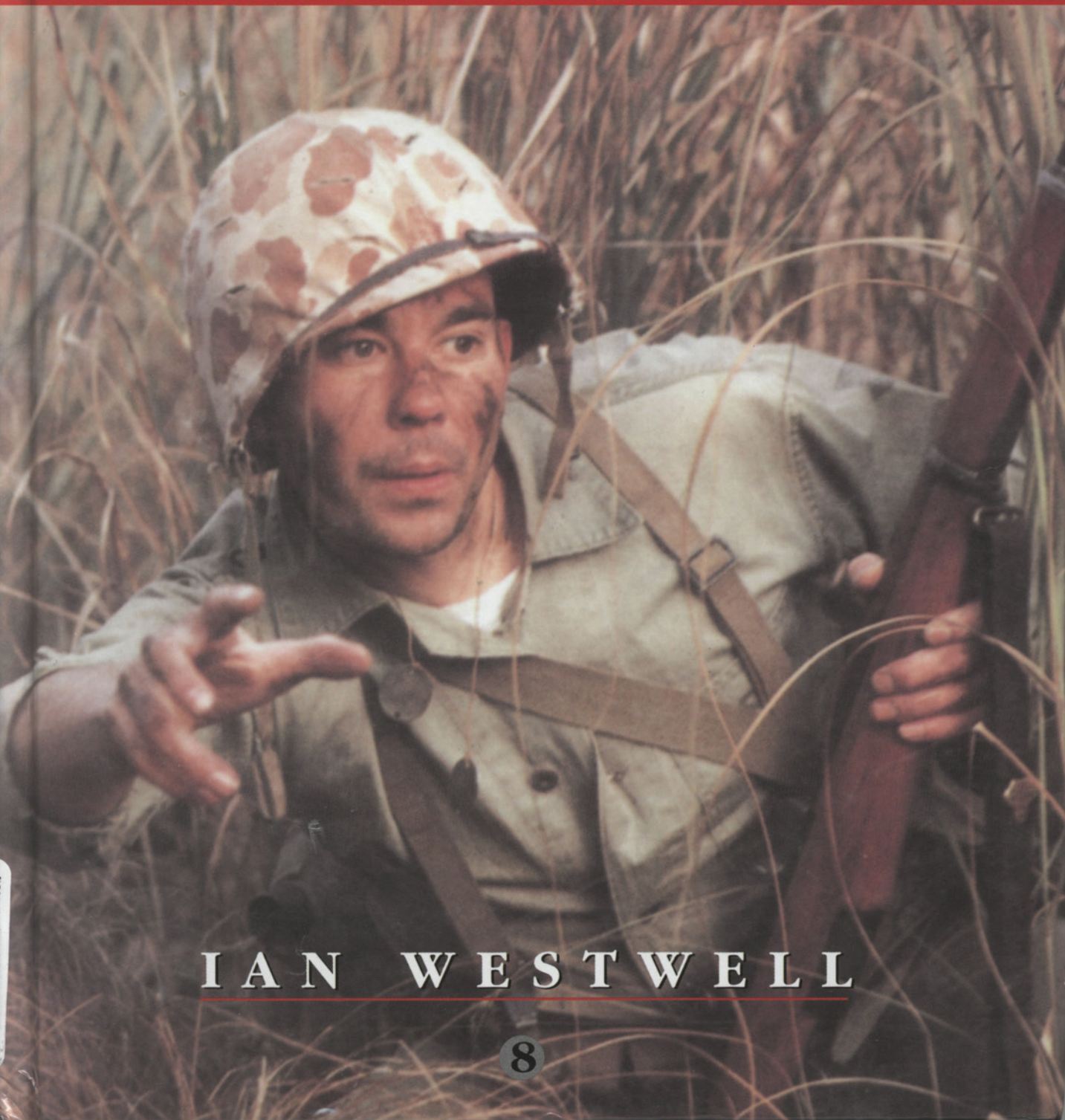


◀ S P E A R H E A D ▶

1st MARINE DIVISION

‘The Old Breed’



I A N W E S T W E L L

◀ S P E A R H E A D ▶

1st MARINE DIVISION

'The Old Breed'

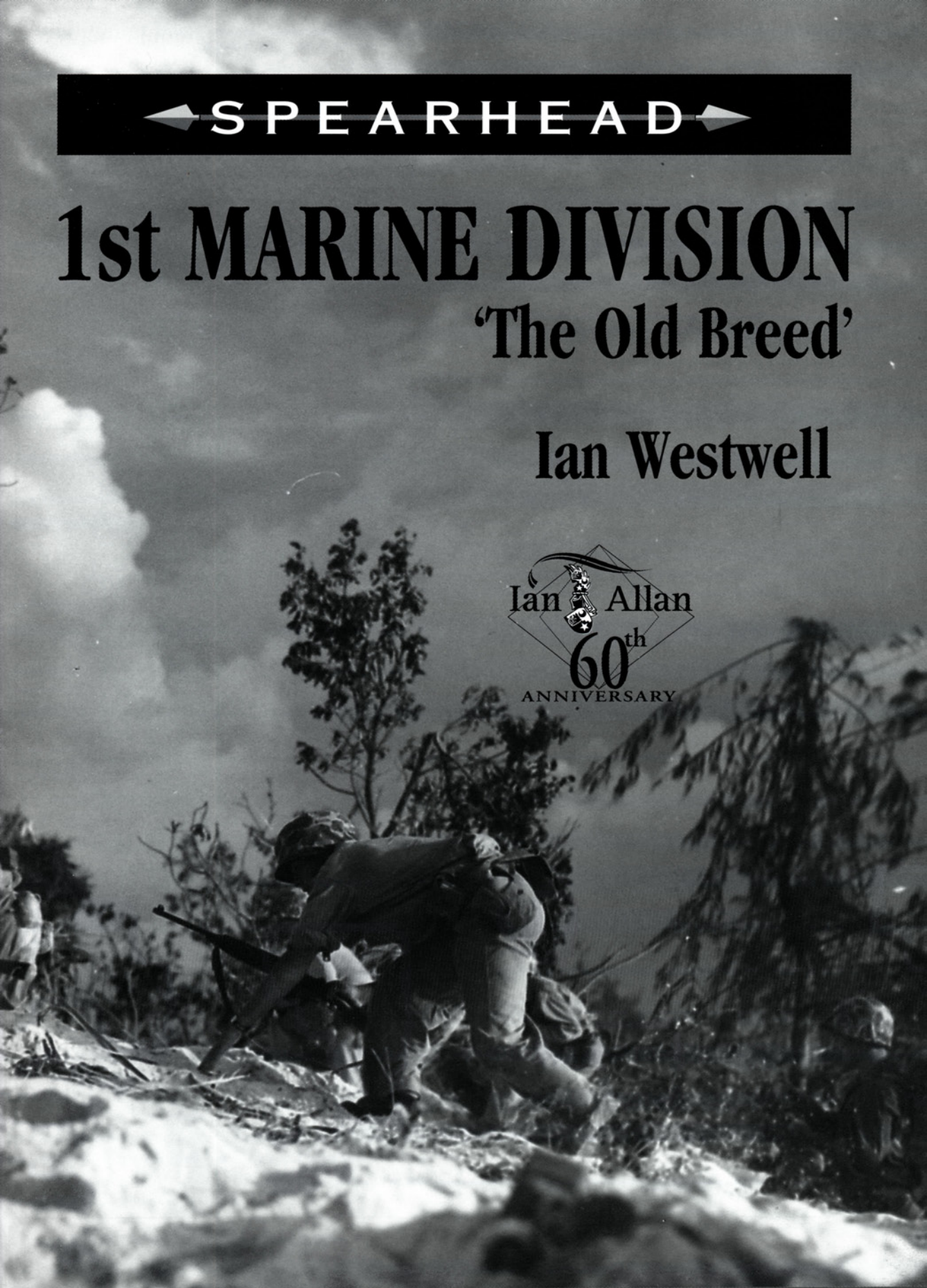


◀ S P E A R H E A D ▶

1st MARINE DIVISION

'The Old Breed'

Ian Westwell



Previous pages: 1st Marines push inland under fire after landing on the white coral sands of Peleliu.

US Army via Real War Photos

First published 2002

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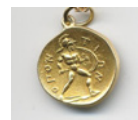
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Abbreviations		Det	Detachment	MC	Motorcycle
AA(A)	Anti-aircraft artillery	DUKW	amphibious vehicles	Med	Medium or Medical
AB	Airborne	DZ	Dropzone	MG	Machine gun
ADC	Aide de camp	ea	each	Mor	Mortar
AEF	American Expeditionary Force	Engr	Engineer	Mot Inf	Motorised infantry
Amb	Ambulance	ETO	European Theatre of Operations	MP	Military Police
Amtrac	Amphibious tractor	FA	Field Artillery	Mtrel	Matériel
Arty	Artillery	FMF	Field Marine Force	OD	Olive drab
asst	Assistant	gren	Grenade	QM	Quartermaster
A/tk	Anti-tank	HBT	Herringbone twill	Pfc/Pvt	Private (first class)
ATRL	Anti-tank rocket launcher (M6 Bazooka)	HMG	Heavy MG (.50 cal)	PI	Platoon
Bn	Battalion	Hy	Heavy	PIR	Parachute infantry regiment
BR	British	Inf	Infantry	RA	Royal Artillery
Brig	Brigade	LCA	Landing craft assault	RCT	Regimental Combat Team
Bty	Battery	LCI	Landing craft infantry	Recce/Recon	Reconnaissance
camo	camouflage	LCM	Landing craft mechanised	RHQ	Regimental HQ
cal	calibre	LCT	Landing craft tank	Sect	Section
Cav	Cavalry	LCVP	Landing craft vehicle and personnel	(T or S/) Sgt	(Technical or Staff/) Sergeant
CC	Combat Command	LMT	Light MG (.30 cal)	SHAEF	Supreme HQ Allied Powers in Europe
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief	LST	Landing Ship Tank	Sig	Signals
CG	Commanding general	Lt	Light	SP	Self-propelled
Cml	Chemical	(1-/2-) Lt	(First/Second) Lieutenant	Tac	Tactical
CO	Commanding officer	LVT (A)	Landing Vehicle Tracked (Armored) aka Buffalo	Tk	Tank
Col	Column	LZ	Landing zone	USAAF	US Army Air Force
CP	Command post	Maint	Maintenance	USMC	US Marine Corps
Coy	Company			Veh	Vehicle
DD	Duplex drive (amphibious)			Dates	
				20/7/54	20 July 1954

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ORIGINS & HISTORY

'Semper Fidelis'

Motto of the Marine Corps, adopted in 1883. It is Latin for *Always Faithful*.

Below: US troops of 7th Amphibious Force land on Dutch New Guinea. In the landing craft is an M8 howitzer motor carriage, the marriage of a 75mm pack howitzer in an open turret and an M5 light tank. Interestingly, the pairing of the M8 turret with the LVT base to produce the LVT(A)-4 (see page 42 top photo) provided amphibious forces with their most resilient landing vehicle. Note the open driver's hatch in the hull front of the M8. Armour played a major role in the Pacific and marine divisions had organic mobile artillery and tank units in their orders of battle.

TRH/National Archives



At the end of June 1939, two months before Hitler's invasion of Poland led to the outbreak of World War II, the US Marine Corps had a strength of just 19,432 men of whom a mere 4,840 were assigned to the Fleet Marine Force (FMF), an expeditionary organization of the US Navy earmarked for full-scale overseas amphibious assault operations. The origins of the concept dated back to the early interwar period, when the Marine Corps commandant was Major-General John Lejeune, a staunch advocate of the corps' use as an overseas expeditionary force and a former member of the 5th Marines. In 1923, he summed up his beliefs to students at the Naval War College: 'The maintenance, equipping, and training of its expeditionary force so it will be in instant readiness to support the fleet in the event of war, I deem to be the most important Marine Corps duty in time of peace.' Lejeune and his immediate successors as commandant, Wendell Neville, Ben Fuller, and John Russell Jr., faced an uphill struggle to achieve their aims. Amphibious warfare doctrines were poorly understood and their value unappreciated in the upper echelons of the US military. Appropriate funds were either not forthcoming or too small for a meaningful expansion programme at a time of fiscal shortages.

CREATING THE 1ST MARINE DIVISION

Some progress was made towards the end of Fuller's term as commandant. In December 1933 the secretary of the navy approved his plan to redesignate the existing expeditionary forces on the East and West Coasts of the United States as the FMF. At this stage the FMF consisted of the 1st Marine Brigade at Quantico, Virginia, and the 2nd

Marine Brigade at San Diego, California. The term brigade was a misnomer as each contained little more than an under-strength infantry regiment with small support units. Each brigade was also assisted by a Marine Aircraft Group and a third air unit, a scouting squadron designated VMS-3, was based on the Virgin Islands. These forces comprised the whole of the FMF, but would form the basis for future expansion once World War II had broken out. There were also moves to develop full-fledged operational techniques for amphibious warfare during this period. In January 1934 the Marine Corps published the *Tentative Manual for Land*



Operations. This was later amended and expanded and was joined, in 1938, by the US Navy's Fleet Training Publication (FTP) 167, which unveiled the amphibious warfare procedures that would become standard in World War II.

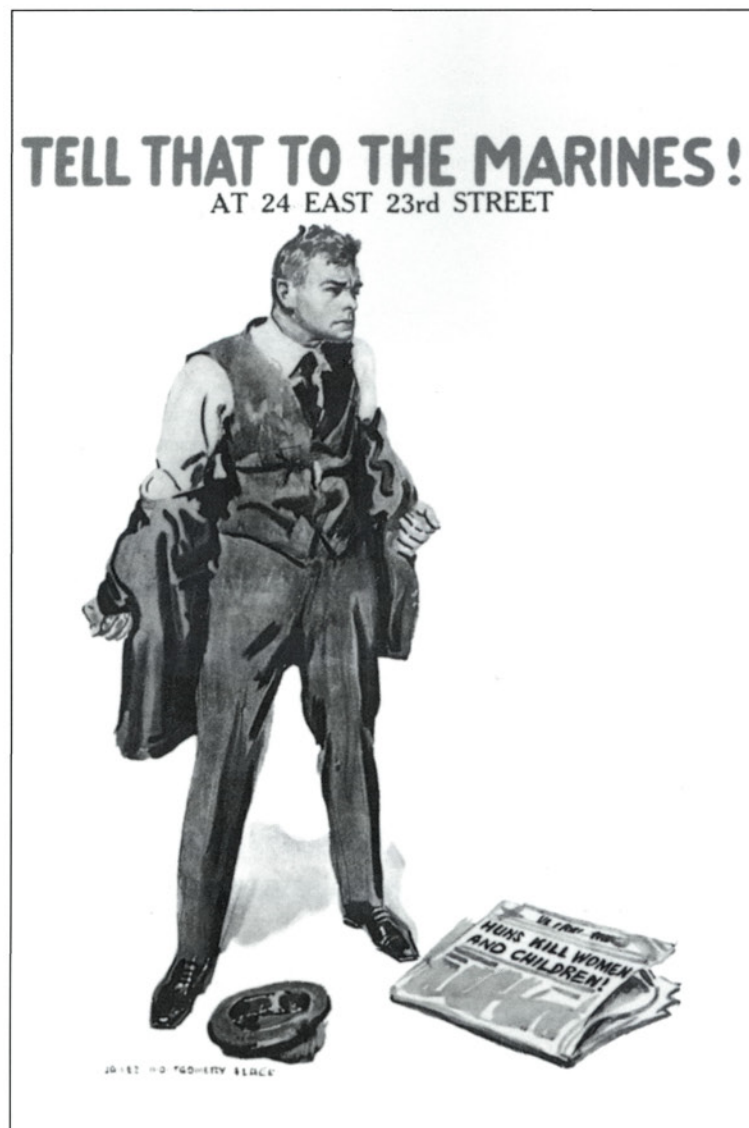
President Franklin Roosevelt's decision to declare a national emergency on 8 September 1939, a week after Hitler's invasion of Poland, and the subsequent need to strength the defences of the United States led to a steady increase in the country's armed forces, including the FMF. By 1940 the FMF had reached a strength of 9,749 and was growing steadily. The expansion programme was boosted in November by the mobilization of the Organized Marine Corps Reserve, a pool of some 5,200 mostly trained and experienced officers and men. Those who were assigned to the 1st Marine Brigade would allow the process of expansion to divisional strength to begin.

Even as the brigade was undergoing expansion, there were potential calls on its services. Nazi Germany's lightning defeat of France in June 1940 and the creation of the Vichy French puppet state rang alarm bells in the Roosevelt administration, which feared that French territories in the New World might be used by Hitler's forces as bases from where the United States could be threatened, possibly by U-boat attacks on its merchant fleet. The chief concern was Martinique in the Antilles, the administrative centre of France's Caribbean empire. Plans were laid to occupy the island by force. The details of the occupation operation were finalized on 8 July, and the 1st Marine Brigade was ordered to prepare for embarkation at New York around a week later. The landings never took place as the status of Martinique was temporarily resolved. However, tensions rose once again in October and Roosevelt ordered a landing to be prepared. The core of the proposed occupation force were the 2,800 men of the 1st Marine Brigade. Yet again, the crisis died away and the brigade stood down to focus on its expansion.

Above: In 1939 fewer than 5,000 Marines were assigned to the FMF — the expeditionary organization of the US Navy earmarked for full-scale overseas amphibious assault operations. By the time this photograph was taken, 22 October 1944, things had changed considerably. Taken from 914m (3,000ft), it shows an attack that 1st Marine Division did not take part in — the invasion of Leyte in the Philippine Islands by Lt-Gen Walter Krueger's 200,000-strong Sixth Army — but it does exemplify the type of operation that the division took part in. In less than five years US forces had gained experience of large amphibious operations and had made the necessary changes to the manpower of the marine divisions. On top of this, they had developed the ships, tactics and weaponry to accomplish amphibious operations effectively. Note the white circle in the centre of the picture and compare it to the photograph at the bottom of page 52.

TRH/US Navy

Below: World War I Marine recruitment poster by James Montgomery Flagg. Born on 18 June 1877 in Pelham Manor, New York, Flagg is best known for his image of Uncle Sam pointing out of the poster 'I Want You for US Army' that was used in both world wars. In fact Flagg, a commercial artist, created nearly 50 works in support of the US war effort during World War I — including 'Tell that to the Marines!' depicting a suited New Yorker reacting to the headline, 'Huns kill women and children!'. *TRH Pictures*



In the late fall of 1940 Brigadier-General Holland Smith's 1st Marine Brigade moved from Quantico to Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. Its units, based on the 5th Marines, the artillery of the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, and attached support units, had outgrown Quantico and the larger Guantanamo base was chosen for the ongoing expansion of the brigade to divisional strength. To provide a leavening of experienced men in the proposed new units, the existing ones were simply split in two at the beginning of 1941. To avoid having all the best men siphoned off into one unit, leaving the worst in the other, Smith ordered each commander to draw up lists of equal length but without including the commander or his executive officer. Each commanding officer and executive did not know which of the lists he would take charge of until Holland had made his personal decision. Consequently, the 5th Marines was divided to form the core of the 7th Marines, while the 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines, was formed from the pre-existing 1st Battalion. A little while later, the process was repeated but this time with three lists for each unit and omitting the three most senior officers in each. Thus each unit provided a third of the men for a new unit. The 5th and 7th Marines, for example, each surrendered men that formed

the basis of a new regiment, the 1st Marines, which was activated on 1 February 1941. On the 12th, the brigade was formerly redesignated as the 1st Marine Division on board the battleship *Texas* while its men were heading for the island of Culebra, part of Puerto Rica, to take part in manoeuvres.

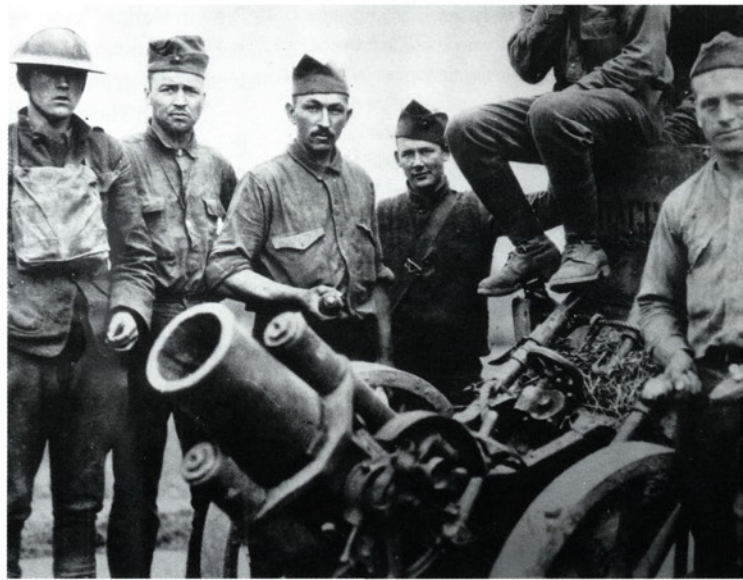
LINEAGE AND HONOURS

The units that made up the bulk of the new division had seen service before in some form. The 1st Marine Regiment had had many guises, with several units having enjoyed the title, often at similar times. However, the unit commonly recognized as the regiment's antecedent was activated at Philadelphia on 27 November 1913 but initially bore the designation 2nd Advance Base Regiment, a title that it held until 1 July 1916, when it was redesignated the 1st Regiment of Marines. In its earlier years the unit was primarily involved in the Caribbean and Central America. In April 1914, it took part in the occupation of Vera Cruz following the Mexican government's arrest of US sailors. During 1915 and 1916, the regiment was in action in Haiti against local rebels threatening the country's economy and extensive US business interests. The 1st Marines scored a notable victory over the local Cacos insurgents with the capture of Fort Riviere on 17 November 1915. In April 1916, the regiment moved to the neighbouring Dominican Republic, where internal unrest was again undermining US business interests. Nevertheless, as with other US units after World War I, the 1st Marines had a chequered history for much of the interwar era. There were

periods of service followed by deactivation and reactivation. On 10 July 1930 the regiment received its permanent designation of 1st Marines as part of a wholesale reordering of the Marine Corps but was disbanded on 1 November 1931, although a number of its troops joined the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, which was renamed the 1st Separate Training Battalion on 1 November 1932. An actual 1st Marines would not appear again until February 1941.

The 5th Marine Regiment, nicknamed as the 'Fighting Fifth', first saw service during the occupation of Vera Cruz in July 1914 but soon returned home to the Philadelphia Naval Yard and was then deactivated, with its men sent to other units. US entry into World War I led to a vast expansion programme and the regiment was reactivated shortly before the declaration of war on 6 April 1917. It sailed for Europe on the USS *Henderson* on the 27th and formed part of the 4th Marine Brigade, which was attached to the Second Army of General John Pershing's American Expeditionary Force (AEF). The regiment's first main engagement came during the Battle of Belleau Wood in June 1918. Tasked with helping to blunt a German drive on Paris by holding the line of the Marne River, the 2nd Division, commanded by Major-General Lejeune and containing the 5th Marines, arrived in late May to face major German forces and on 5 June a French colonel suggested retreating in the face of overwhelming odds. The commander of the 5th Marines, Colonel Wendell Neville, gave a curt reply to the suggestion: 'Retreat, hell. We just got here.' On the following day the 5th Marine Regiment attacked on the right towards the village of Torcy and was able to take Hill 142 by 12.00 hours, but the Germans hung on to many positions. The battle for the heavily defended and shell-blasted wood continued for the next few weeks. The marines were withdrawn from the action on the 15th but returned to complete its occupation on the evening of the 21st–22nd. The troops of the 13,500-strong brigade had suffered some 5,700 casualties during the battle, but had been christened 'Devil Dogs' by the Germans because of their fighting prowess.

The marines continued to play a central role in the AEF's campaigns on the Western Front. In July and August the regiment took part in the successful Allied Aisne-Marne counter-offensive, which eradicated a bulge in the line between Soissons and Reims. The regiment next participated in the St Mihiel offensive, the first large-scale US attack of the war, to the south-east of Verdun. In four days, 12–16 September, a large German salient was eliminated. The 2nd Division, part of the US I Corps, was stationed on the far right of the bulge and made excellent progress, bypassing the supposedly impregnable high ground of Mont Sec as the Germans continued an ongoing withdrawal. The regiment's final attacks of the war were during the Meuse-Argonne operation launched on the 26th. After days of bitter fighting to break through successive lines of German defences the advance bogged down and had to be reorganized. The 2nd Division was moved to support the French Fourth Army during its attacks on the formidable Mont Blanc position. The advance opened on the morning of 1 October and the 5th Marines stormed Mont Blanc's left flank, overran many German positions and completed the occupation of the supposedly impregnable area on 4 October. After a spell in reserve, the 2nd Division returned to the line on the 17th for the final stages of the offensive, a drive on Sedan. In the face of crumbling German resistance, the division stormed the Barricourt heights on 1 November, and the armistice followed 10 days later.



Above: German trench mortar captured by US Marines of 2nd Battalion, 5th Regiment at Belleau Wood. The 'Devil Dogs' are justly proud of this action, for although it is sometimes seen as 'an inconsequential affair' against the bigger canvas of World War I, more USMC troops fell in the attack on Belleau Wood than had in combat in the whole of the unit's history up till then. The final cost was around half the Marine force. The action had stopped the German attack towards Paris and, quite possibly, saved the day for the Allies. In recognition of their prowess the wood was renamed Bois de la Brigade de Marine. *TRH Pictures*

Right: From the start of the campaign against the Japanese in the Pacific it was obvious that amphibious operations were going to require purpose-built vessels capable of delivering large numbers of troops, their equipment, transport, heavy weapons and logistic support to the battlefield, as well as providing the necessary support for opposed landings. The United States embarked, therefore, on a massive building programme that saw large numbers of specialized ships built, such as:

- **LCI** (Landing Craft Infantry) — had a crew of 24–60 sailors and carried 200 soldiers, who descended from ramps on each side. LCIs came in a number of forms including LCI(L) — Large; LCI(R) — Rocket, that could fire as many as 600 4.5in rockets on one run; LCI(G) — Gunship, armed with 40mm, 20mm and machine guns; LCI(M) — Mortar, that carried 3in and 6in mortars; LCI(D) — Demolition, that carried frogmen to clear invasion beaches; LCI(FF) — Flotilla Flagship, carrying the command staff of an LCI flotilla. There were also smoke-laying LCIs to hide the fleet from suicide pilots.
- **LCS** (Landing Craft Support) — modified gunships used for close inshore troop support and fighting. They carried 3in, .50in gun, twin 40mm guns and 20mm guns. Also LCS(L)(3) — Landing Craft Support (Large) (Mk 3) — 130 were built during WWII.
- **LCT** (Landing Craft Tank) — built in two models, Mk 5 with a bow ramp only and Mk 6 with both a bow and stern ramp. The US Navy's all purpose general duty vessel, as well as carrying tanks they were used in many different roles and were converted and equipped with guns and rockets.
- **LSM** (Landing Ship Medium) and LSM(R) (Landing Ship Medium (Rocket)) — 558 were built during World War II, the latter designed to support landings by providing close-in fire support using their primary battery of rocket launchers — eight to ten twin 5in rocket launchers, each capable of firing 30 rockets per minute.
- **LST** (Tank Landing Ship, one of which is pictured here; see also exploded view on page 16) — designed to carry equipment, cargo and troops directly onto the beachhead. 1,051 of these ships were laid down during WWII and many continued to give service after the war.
- **LCVP** (Landing Craft Vehicle or Personnel) — the small landing craft used along with LVTs and DUKWs at the sharp end of amphibious landings.

TRH/US Army

The 5th Marines were stationed in Germany after the war, returning to the United States in 1919. A period of mixed fortunes followed, including deactivation, reactivation, home service and action in Nicaragua.

The 7th Marine Regiment originated on 14 August 1917, when it was activated at Philadelphia. It did not see service on the Western Front but was deployed to augment the garrison at Guantanamo Bay. After two years of overseas service, it was deactivated in 1919, but was again mobilized briefly in 1933. Serving on warships off Cuba during a period of internal unrest, it took no part in operations as these were contained by marine units already on the ground. The regiment once again returned to the United States and was demobilized until 1941. The 11th Marine Regiment was established as a light artillery unit at Quantico in January 1918, but served as an infantry unit in France during World War I. Between the wars it was decommissioned and reactivated on two occasions, seeing service in Nicaragua. It was reactivated in 1940 to be ready for action as an artillery regiment.

The expansion of the Marine Corps from 1939 was based on the need to fulfil three missions. First, at least two divisions and two air wings were needed for the FMF. Second, new units known as defence battalions were required to protect the larger overseas bases, such as Guantanamo and various islands in the Pacific. Third, detachments had to be raised to guard US bases and the warships of the growing navy. This vast expansion programme required tens of thousands of new recruits, volunteers who needed training. The existing facilities were far too small to cope with the demands placed on them and new bases had to be built as speedily as possible. On 15 February 1941 official authorization was granted to build a new marine base on the coast of North Carolina. The location, the New River area of Onslow County, was deemed ideal for amphibious warfare training but the 1st Division's official historian also remarked that '[It was] 111,170 acres of water, coastal swamp, and plain, theretofore inhabited largely by sand flies, ticks, chiggers, and snakes.' Extensive plans for what would be designated Camp Lejeune were drawn up but when the base was activated on 1 May as Marine Barracks, New River, it was little more than a vast tented camp.

Elements of the 1st Marine Division began arriving at New River shortly after its opening and over the following months took part in various training programmes, including a joint amphibious exercise with the US Army's 1st Infantry Division. The division was still not at full strength but shortages of instructors were overcome and the training programme expanded from the dangerously short period of 24 days in 1940 to a more realistic seven weeks. By the end of November 1941 the Marine Corps had a total strength of some 65,000 men in bases across the United States and overseas; 8,918 of these formed the still understrength 1st Marine Division. Though these men were still training for combat, they would get a taste of the real thing much sooner than anyone expected. On 7 December, the Japanese attacked the naval base at Pearl Harbor, precipitating US entry into the war.

The United States declared war on Japan on 8 December 1941, but could do little to halt the lightning Japanese onslaught across the Pacific that immediately followed the strike against Pearl Harbor. In rapid succession over the following six months US and other Allied bases across the theatre fell — Hong Kong, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines — as the Japanese strove to push ever farther across the West and South-west Pacific to establish a viable defensive perimeter. By May 1942 they had reached the British Solomon Islands protectorate in the South-west Pacific, which were to be used for further offensives towards New Guinea and Australia. However, their plans for the attack on Port Moresby, the capital of New Guinea, were dislocated by US successes at the Battle of the Coral Sea on 7–8 May, although the Japanese continued to strengthen their positions in the Solomons.



READY FOR WAR

Right: Tractors pull 155mm towed artillery pieces from an LCT. The US Marine Corps artillery regiments were equipped with a variety of 155mm guns — from the French-designed Schneider M1917 to the M1A1 'Long Tom'. *TRH/US Marine Corps*

Below right: LSTs at the beachhead: in the foreground a jeep is manhandled off the ramp of *LST-202*. *USMC via Real War Photos*

TARGET GUADALCANAL

The US victory at the Battle of Midway in early June 1942, in which the Imperial Japanese Navy lost four aircraft carriers, effectively stopped further Japanese expansion across the South-west Pacific and the US Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that a limited counter-offensive was feasible. The target chosen was Guadalcanal, one of the Solomon Islands and within the sphere of operations of General Douglas MacArthur's South-west Pacific Area command. Aerial reconnaissance had indicated that the Japanese were building a major air base on the island from where a renewed thrust southward towards Australia could be supported. However, MacArthur lacked many of the resources to undertake an amphibious assault and Guadalcanal was transferred to Admiral Chester Nimitz's Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas. On 25 June Nimitz ordered Vice-Admiral Richard Ghormley, commander of the South Pacific Area, to prepare an assault on Guadalcanal. The operation, code-named Watchtower, was given a provisional date of 1 August, leaving very little time to gather the resources for the operation.

Estimates suggested that at least a division of around 20,000 men was needed for the initial landing phase and only the 1st Marine Division, which had begun arriving in New Zealand in mid-June, had the appropriate training as the other five divisions in the theatre were from the US Army. When word reached the division's commander, Major-General Alexander Vandegrift, he was somewhat taken aback. His division was still arriving in New Zealand and was expecting to undergo a further six months of round-the-clock training before entering combat. Many of his officers and non-commissioned officers were veterans of earlier conflicts, but the greater part of the ordinary marines were new to war. Colonel Clifton Cates, the 1st Marines' commanding officer, reckoned that 90 per cent of his regiment had joined up after Pearl Harbor. To make matters worse, Vandegrift did not even have the whole division with him. The 5th and part of the 11th Marines were present, but the 1st Marines and the remainder of the 11th were still heading for New Zealand from the United States, while Colonel James Webb's 7th Marines, after a brief stay in Australia, were on British Samoa undergoing jungle and amphibious warfare training. The manpower shortage was acute and the 2nd and 10th Marines, both from the 2nd Division, were sent from San Diego to bolster Vandegrift's command. Other units were drawn from garrisons in the Pacific — Lieutenant-Colonel Merritt Edson's 1st Raider Battalion based on New Caledonia and the 3rd Defense Battalion under Colonel Robert Pepper stationed at Pearl Harbor. The 1st Marine Parachute Battalion under Major Robert Williams was also attached to the division.



COUNTDOWN TO WATCHTOWER

Apart from gathering the forces needed to bring the division up to strength, Vandegrift faced the problem of organizing it for a combat operation. He argued for a short postponement to Watchtower, stating that his still-arriving troops had to be combat equipped and supplies loaded onto shipping in the correct order for a complex operation in little more than a month. The commander gained a short breathing space – Watchtower was postponed for a week, until 7 August. Nevertheless the pre-invasion work carried on at a breakneck pace at Wellington dockyard. A shortage of appropriate shipping meant that all of the 2.5 ton trucks belonging to division's motor transport battalion and a battalion of 155mm howitzers from Colonel Pedro del Valle's 11th Marines had to be temporarily left behind. The marines themselves were restricted to the absolute essentials – 60 days of supplies, enough ammunition for 10 days of heavy combat and only the smallest amount of individual baggage as practicable. The reloading process was carried out until the very last possible moment before departure on 22 July.

Watchtower had been conceived and ordered in rapid succession; some marines privately suggested it should have been renamed Operation Shoestring. Working to a tight deadline, the division's preparations and the gathering of the other elements of the invasion force had been hurried. Time to practise for the forthcoming amphibious assault was equally short and took place at Koro, one of the Fiji Islands and 1,800km (1,000 miles) from Guadalcanal, after the division had left New Zealand. The troop carriers and escorts arrived at Koro from various destinations on 26 July and the

Below: A tractor pulls 105mm ammunition from a landing craft. The beachhead, once secured, continued to be a scene of frantic activity until airstrips inland could supplement the logistic effort. US Marine Corps divisions were always heavy on artillery and the workhorses of the divisions at the start of the war were the 75mm pack howitzer battalions. As the war went on, however, 105mm howitzers replaced the 75s.

TRH/US Army



training that was accomplished was restricted to deploying the transports' landing craft as extensive coral reefs prevented any beach-landing exercises. Koro also permitted the commanders of the invasion force's various components to meet for the first time. Vandegrift received some good news, the 7th Marines on Samoa were being prepared to embark at four days' notice to support Watchtower. Rear Admiral Richmond Turner was confident his landing vessels and support warships could get the 1st Division ashore. However, Vice-Admiral Frank Fletcher, overall commander of the task force, also informed him that his carriers, *Saratoga*, *Enterprise*, and *Wasp*, could only provide air cover in the invasion area for two days due to the threat posed by Japanese land-based aircraft in the Solomons. Vandegrift protested that it would take a minimum of four days to disembark his command. A compromise was reached – Fletcher's carriers would remain on station for 72 hours.

The armada departed Koro on 28 July, attempting to deceive the enemy by initially sailing on a heading that would take it to Australia. At 12.00 hours on 5 August the various ships turned north on a path that would lead them to the Solomons. Arriving undetected during the night of 6-7 August, the assault transports sailing through Sealark Channel split into two groups. Transport Division X-Ray's 15 vessels moved toward a point east of Lunga Point on the north shore of Guadalcanal, while the eight ships of Transport Division Yoke made for the islands of Florida, Gavutu, Tanambogo and Tulagi. Operation Watchtower was only a matter of brief hours away. Vandegrift, the first general to command a marine division outside the continental United States, was poised to begin the first US ground offensive of the war.



THE INFANTRYMAN'S CREED

'MY RIFLE'

The Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor prompted William Rupertus, one of the 1st Division's senior officers at the time and later its commander, to compose 'My Rifle', which is still in use to the present day.

THIS IS MY RIFLE

There are many like it but this one is mine.

My rifle is my best friend.

It is my life.

I must master it as I master my life.

My rifle, without me, is useless.

Without my rifle, I am useless.

I must fire my rifle true.

I must shoot straighter than any enemy who is trying to kill me.

I must shoot him before he shoots me.

I will...

My rifle and myself know what counts in war is not the rounds we fire, the noise of our burst, nor the smoke we make.

We know that it is the hits that count.

We will hit...

My rifle is human, even as I, because it is my life.

Thus, I will learn it as a brother.

I will learn its weakness, its strength, its parts, its accessories, its sights and its barrel.

I will keep my rifle clean and ready, even as I am clean and ready.

We will become part of each other.

We will...

Before god I swear this creed.

My rifle and myself are the defenders of my country.

We are masters of our enemy.

We are saviors of my life.

So be it until victory is America's and there is no enemy, but Peace.

1ST MARINE DIVISION MAIN WARTIME UNITS

GUADALCANAL

INFANTRY

1st Marine
5th Marine
7th Marine
later 164th Inf Regt, US Army

ARTILLERY

11th Marine

ARMOUR

1st Tank Battalion

ENGINEERS

1st Engineer Battalion
1st Pioneer Battalion

OTHER TROOPS

Divisional HQ Battalion
1st Service Battalion
1st Special Weapons Battalion
1st Parachute Battalion
1st Amtrac Battalion
1st Medical Battalion
1st and 2nd Raider Battalions
5th (Det A), 3rd and 9th Defense Battalions
1st Aviation Engineer Battalion
3rd Barrage Balloon Squadron

NEW BRITAIN

INFANTRY

1st Marine
5th Marine
7th Marine

ARTILLERY

11th Marine

ARMOUR

1st Tank Battalion

ENGINEERS

17th Marine Regiment
1st Engineer Battalion,
2nd Pioneer Battalion,
19th Naval Construction Battalion

OTHER TROOPS

Divisional HQ Battalion
1st Service Battalion
1st Special Weapons Battalion
1st Motor Transport Battalion
1st Amtrac Battalion
1st Medical Battalion
12th Defense Battalion

PELELIU

INFANTRY

1st Marine
5th Marine
7th Marine

ARTILLERY

11th Marine
3rd and 8th Battalion III Phibcorps
Artillery (155mm)
12th AAA Battalion

ARMOUR

1st Tank Battalion

ENGINEERS

1st Engineer Battalion
1st Pioneer Battalion
33rd and 73rd Naval Construction Battalions

OTHER TROOPS

Divisional HQ Battalion
1st Service Battalion
1st Motor Transport Battalion
3rd (Armored), 1st, 6th and 8th Amtrac Battalions
1st Medical Battalion
16th Field Depot

OKINAWA

INFANTRY

1st Marine
5th Marine
7th Marine

ARTILLERY

11th Marine

ARMOUR

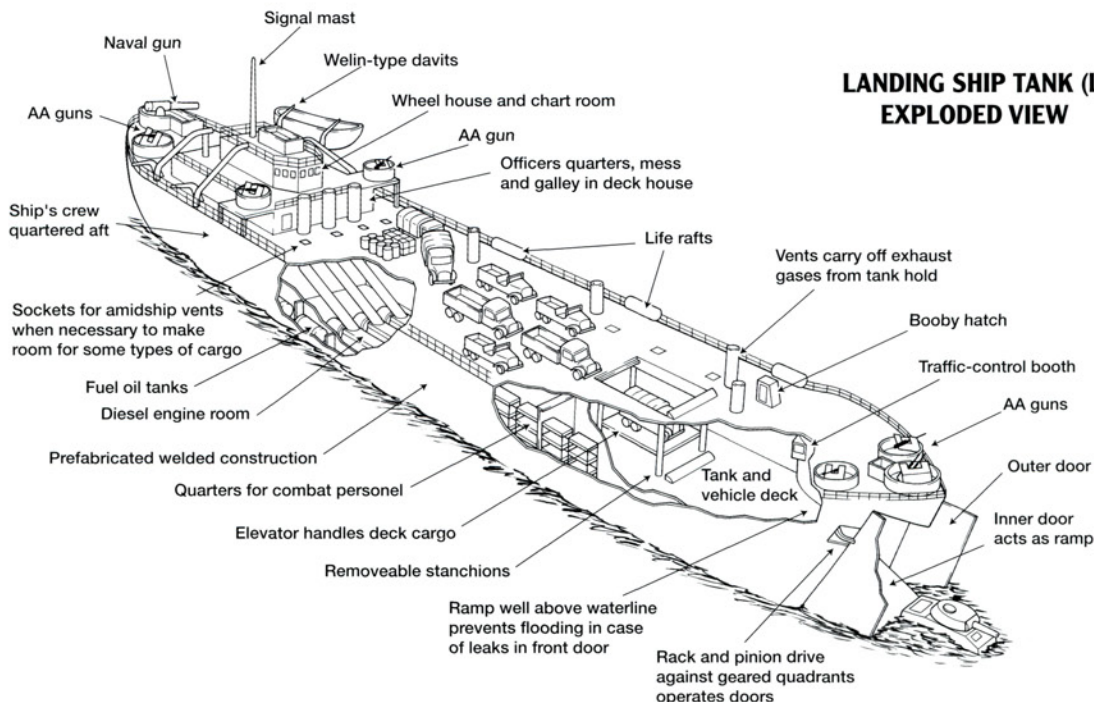
1st Tank Battalion

ENGINEERS

1st Engineer Battalion
1st Pioneer Battalion
145th Naval Construction Battalion

OTHER TROOPS

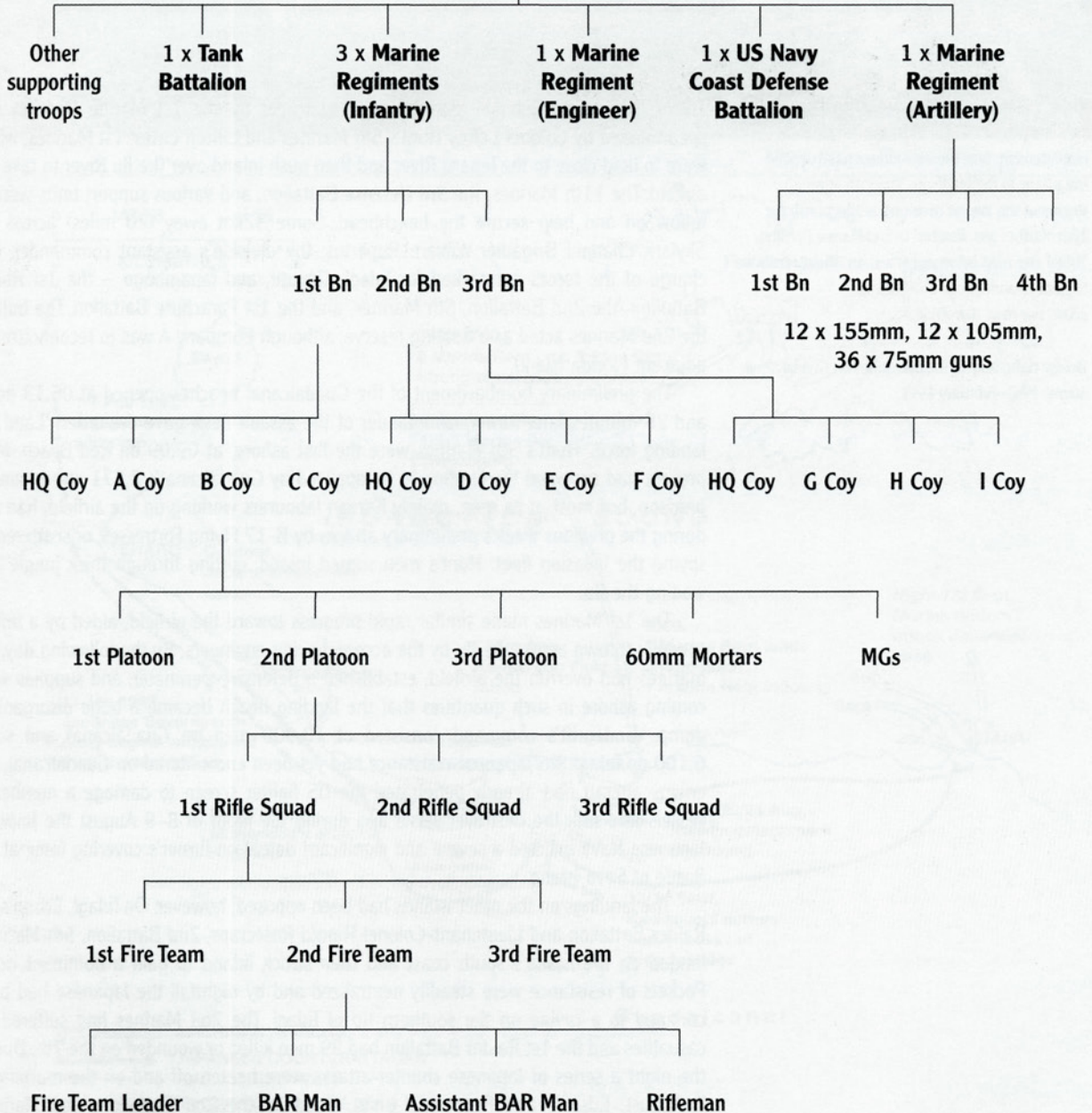
Divisional HQ Battalion
1st Service Battalion
1st Motor Transport Battalion
1st Medical Battalion
3rd (Armored), 1st and 8th Amtrac Battalions



**LANDING SHIP TANK (LST)
EXPLODED VIEW**

MAIN COMPONENTS OF A MARINE DIVISION 1942

Division HQ



IN ACTION

Right: 75mm M1A1 pack howitzer on Tulagi. The crew has placed the gun in a captured Japanese emplacement; note the camouflage paint applied irregularly to the sandbags. The 11th Marine Regiment was the 1st Division's artillery unit; the 10th Marines was attached to 2nd Marine Division. Tulagi (see map below right) was an island across the Skylark Channel from Guadalcanal.

USMC via Real War Photos

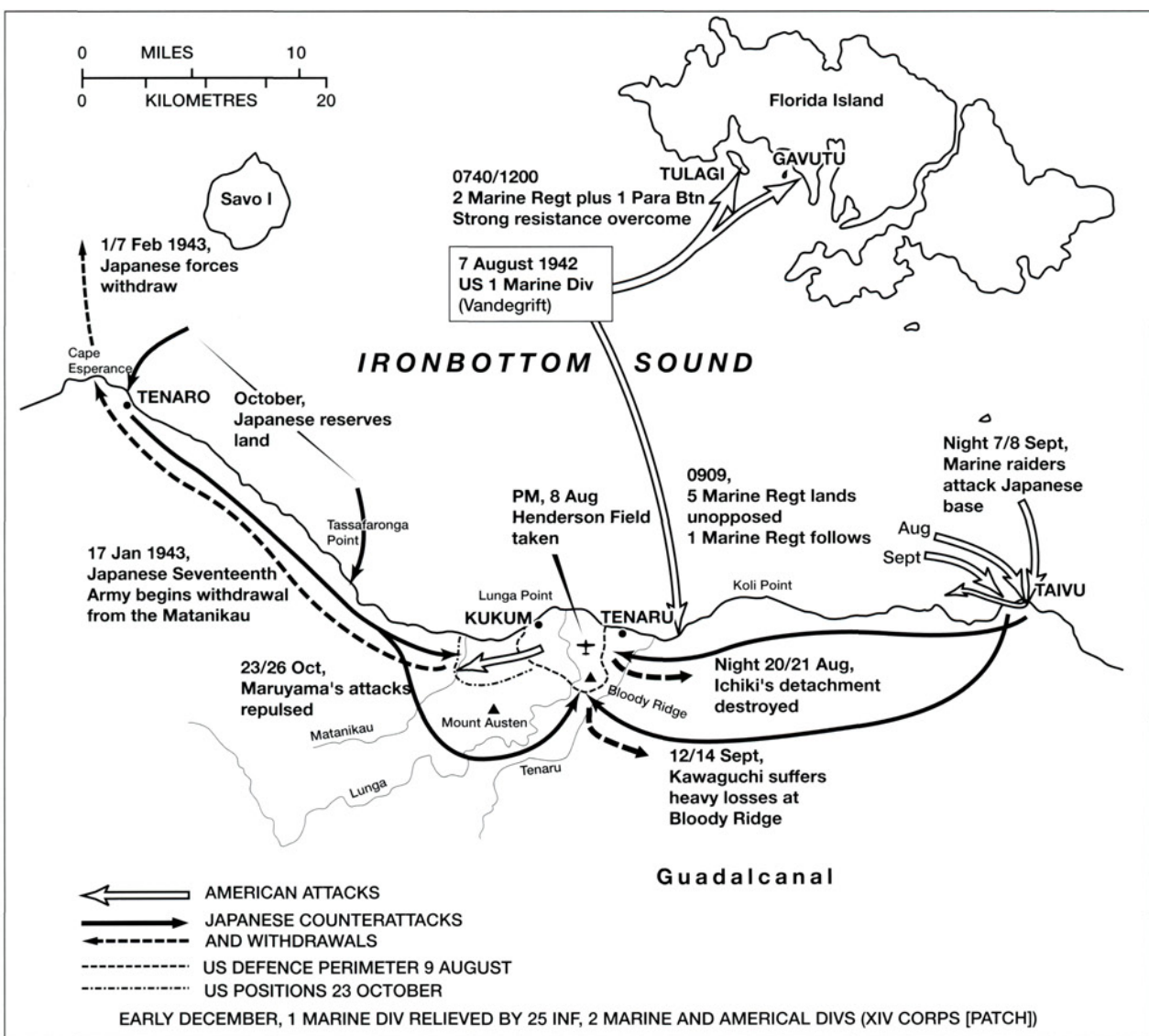
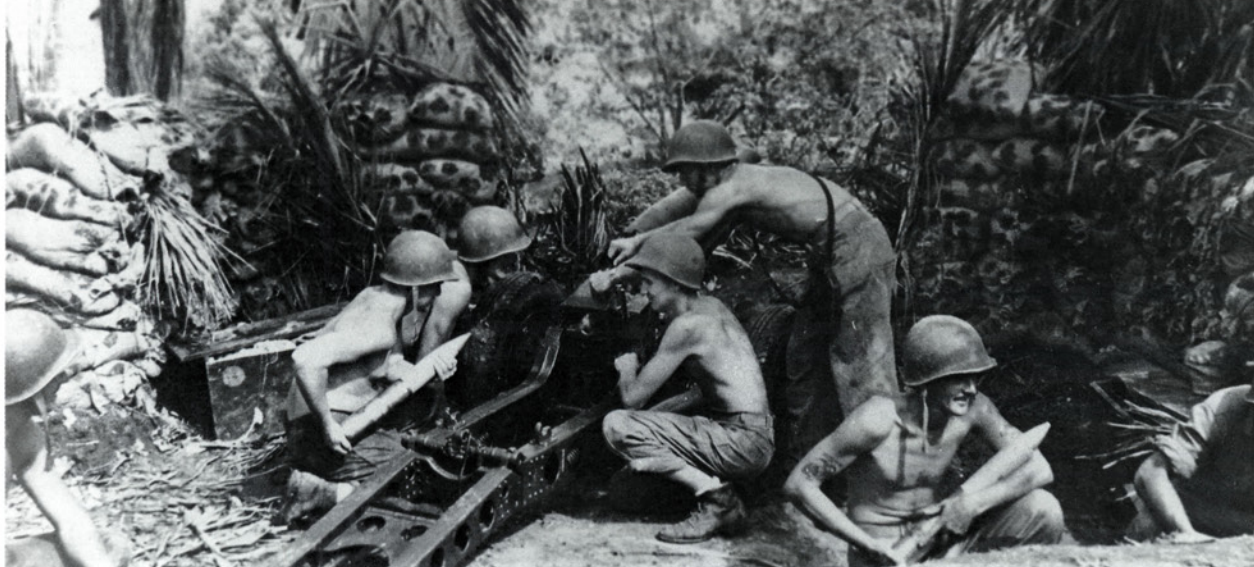
Below right: Map of the operations on Guadalcanal, August 1942–February 1943.

The 7 August amphibious assault on Guadalcanal by the 1st Marine Division was spearheaded by Colonel LeRoy Hunt's 5th Marines and Clifton Cates' 1st Marines, which were to land close to the Tenaru River and then push inland over the Ilu River to take the airfield. The 11th Marines, the 3rd Defense Battalion, and various support units were to follow on and help secure the beachhead. Some 32km away (20 miles) across the Skylark Channel Brigadier William Rupertus, the division's assistant commander, had charge of the forces earmarked for Tulagi, Gavutu, and Tanambogo – the 1st Raider Battalion, the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, and the 1st Parachute Battalion. The bulk of the 2nd Marines acted as a floating reserve, although Company A was to reconnoitre the adjacent Florida Island.

The preliminary bombardment of the Guadalcanal beaches opened at 06.13 hours and 28 minutes later Turner, commander of the assault fleet, gave the order: 'Land the landing force.' Hunt's 5th Marines were the first ashore, at 09.09 on Red Beach. Most present had expected the landing to be opposed by Guadalcanal's 2,571-strong enemy garrison, but most of its men, mainly Korean labourers working on the airfield, had fled during the previous week's preliminary attacks by B-17 Flying Fortresses, or scattered on spying the invasion fleet. Hunt's men surged inland, cutting through thick jungle and wading the Ilu.

The 1st Marines made similar rapid progress toward the airfield, aided by a bridge speedily thrown across the Ilu by the accompanying engineers. By the following day, the marines had overrun the airfield, established a defensive perimeter, and supplies were coming ashore in such quantities that the landing beach became a huge disorganized dump. Vandegrift's command consisted of 10,900 men on Guadalcanal and some 6,100 on Tulagi. No Japanese resistance had yet been encountered on Guadalcanal, but enemy aircraft had already penetrated the US fighter screen to damage a number of vessels and sink the destroyer *Jervis* and during the night of 8–9 August the Imperial Japanese Navy inflicted a severe and significant defeat on Turner's covering force at the Battle of Savo Island.

The landings on the other islands had been opposed, however. On Tulagi, Edson's 1st Raider Battalion and Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Rosecrans' 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, landed on the island's south coast and then struck inland to gain a dominant ridge. Pockets of resistance were steadily neutralized and by nightfall the Japanese had been confined to a ravine on the southern tip of Tulagi. The 2nd Marines had suffered 56 casualties and the 1st Raider Battalion had 99 men killed or wounded on the 7th. During the night a series of Japanese counter-attacks were beaten off and on the morning of 8 August, Edson's and Rosecrans' units, aided by the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines, mopped up the remaining enemy. The US assault on Gavutu and Tanambogo, small islands connected by a causeway, also met resistance. The 1st Parachute Battalion landed





Top: Troops leave Guadalcanal on foot and by truck after months of bitter fighting. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Above: A sniper climbs a palm tree. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Above right: Manning a 50-cal AA gun. This water-cooled 0.5in M2 machine gun is mounted on an M2 tripod mounting. Note the gunner's support curling around his back. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Right: Divisional artillery in the form of a French 155mm on Guadalcanal. *USMC via Real War Photos*



1st MARINE DIVISION (REINFORCED) AT GUADALCANAL AUGUST–DECEMBER 1942

Division Headquarters (7 August–8 December)

CG Maj-Gen Alexander A. Vandegrift

ADC Brig-Gen William H. Rupertus

CofS Col William C. James (to 21 September)

Col Gerald C. Thomas (from 21 September)

D-1 Col Robert C. Kilmartin, Jr (to 21 September)

Maj James C. Murray, Jr (from 22 September)

D-2 Lt-Col Frank B. Goettge (MIA 12 August)

Lt-Col Edmund J. Buckley (from 14 August)

D-3 Lt-Col Gerald C. Thomas (to 20 September)

Lt-Col Merrill B. Twining (from 21 September)

D-4 Lt-Col Randolph McC. Pate (to 21 October)

Lt-Col Raymond P. Coffman (21 October–25 November)

Lt-Col William S. Fellers (from 26 November)

HQ Battalion

OC Lt-Col Edwin J. Farrell

1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion

CO Lt-Col Walter W. Barr

1st Aviation Engineer Battalion (18 September–8 February)

CO Maj Thomas F. Riley

1st Engineer Battalion (7 August–22 December)

CO Maj James G. Frazer (to 24 October)

Maj Henry H. Crockett (from 25 October)

1st Medical Battalion (7 August–22 December)

CO Cdr Don S. Knowlton, MC (to 14 December)

LCdr Everett B. Keck, MC (from 15 December)

1st Parachute Battalion (7 August–18 September)

CO Maj Robert H. Williams (WIA 7 August)

Maj Charles A. Miller (8 August–5 September)

Capt Harry L. Torgerson (6–8 September)

Maj Charles A. Miller (9–17 September)

Capt Harry L. Torgerson (from 18 September)

1st Pioneer Battalion (7 August–22 December)

CO Col George R. Rowan (to 19 September)

Maj Robert G. Ballance (from 20 September)

1st Raider Battalion (7 August–16 October)

CO Col Merritt A. Edson (to 20 September)

Lt-Col Samuel B. Griffith, II (22 September–WIA 27 September)

Capt Ira J. Irwin (from 27 September)

1st Service Battalion (7 August–22 December)

CO Lt-Col Hawley C. Waterman

1st Special Weapons Battalion (7 August–22 December)

CO Lt-Col Robert B. Luckey (to 15 October)

Maj Richard W. Wallace (from 16 October)

1st Tank Battalion, Forward Echelon (7 August–22 December)

CO Maj Harvey S. Walseth

1st Marine (7 August–22 December)

CO Col Clifton B. Bates

1st Battalion Lt-Col Lenard B. Cresswell

2nd Battalion Lt-Col Edwin A. Pollock (to 22 September)

Lt-Col William W. Stickney (from 24 September)

3rd Battalion Lt-Col William N. McKelvy, Jr.

5th Marine (7 August–9 December)

CO Col Leroy P. Unit (to 19 September)

Col Merritt A. Edson (from 21 September)

1st Battalion Lt-Col William E. Maxwell (to 28 August)

Maj Donal W. Fuller (30 August–11 October)

Maj William P. L. Thyson, Jr. (12 October)

Maj William K. Enright (13–23 October)

Maj William P. L. Thyson, Jr. (24–30 October)

Maj William K. Enright (from 31 October)

2nd Battalion

Lt-Col Harold E. Rosecrans (WIA 11 September)

Capt Joseph J. Dudkowski (11–17 September)

Lt-Col Walker A. Reves (18–24 September)

Capt Joseph J. Dudkowski (25–30 September)

Maj David S. McDougal (1 October–WIA 8 October)

Maj William J. Piper, Jr. (8–11 October)

Maj Lewis W. Walt (from 12 October)

3rd Battalion

Lt-Col Frederick C. Biebusch (to 21 September)

Maj Robert O. Bowen (from 22 September)

(18 September–5 January)

7th Marine

CO Col James B. Webb (to 19 September)

Col Amor LeR. Sims (from 20 September)

1st Battalion

Lt-Col Lewis B. Puller (WIA 8 November)

Maj John E. Weber (9–17 November)

Lt-Col Lewis B. Puller (from 18 November)

2nd Battalion

Lt-Col Herman H. Hanneken (to 17 November)

Maj Odell M. Conoley (18–28 November)

Lt-Col Herman H. Hanneken (from 29 November)

3rd Battalion

Lt-Col Edwin J. Farrell (to 21 September)

Lt-Col William R. Williams (from 24 September)

(7 August–22 December)

11th Marine

CO Brig-Gen Pedro A. del Valle

1st Battalion

Lt-Col Joseph R. Knowlan (to 18 October)

Lt-Col Manly L. Curry (18 October–27 November)

Lt-Col Donovan D. Sult (28 November–20 December)

Maj Lewis J. Fields (from 21 December)

2nd Battalion

Lt-Col Edward J. Hagen (to 19 October)

Maj Forest C. Thomson (20–30 October)

Maj Lewis A. Ennis (1–5 November)

Maj Forest C. Thomson (6–11 November)

Maj Lewis A. Ennis (12–30 November)

Maj Forest C. Thomson (from 1 December)

3rd Battalion

Lt-Col James J. Keating

4th Battalion

Lt-Col Melvin E. Fuller (to 26 October)

Maj Carl G.F. Korn (27–31 October)

Capt Albert H. Potter (from 1 November)

5th Battalion

Lt-Col Eugene H. Price (to 30 October)

Maj Noah P. Wook, Jr. (from 1 November)

2nd Raider Battalion (4 November–17 December)

CO Lt-Col Evans F. Carlson

3rd Barrage Balloon Squadron (8 September–8 February 1943)

CO Capt Robert C. McDermond

3rd Defense Battalion (7 August–8 February 1943)

CO Col Robert H. Pepper (to 28 November)

Lt-Col Harold C. Roberts (29 November–11 January 1943)

Lt-Col Samuel G. Taxis (from 12 January 1943)

5th Defense Battalion, Detachment A (8 September–8 February 1943)

Redesignated 14th Defense Battalion, 15 January 1943

CO Lt-Col William F. Parks (to 5 December)

Col Galen J. Sturgis (from 5 December)

9th Defense Battalion (30 November–8 February 1943)

CO Col David R. Nimmer (to 2 February 1943)

Lt-Col William J. Scheyer (from 3 February 1943)

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR to SERGEANT JOHN BASILONE, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS, for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

For extraordinary heroism . . . while serving with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines . . . on 24 and 25 October 1942 . . . Sgt. Basilone, in charge of 2 sections of heavy machineguns, fought valiantly . . . one of Sgt. Basilone's sections, with its guncrews, was put out of action, leaving only 2 men able to carry on. Moving an extra gun into position, he placed it in action, then, under continual fire, repaired another and personally manned it, gallantly holding his line until replacements arrived. A little later, with ammunition critically low and the supply lines cut off, Sgt. Basilone . . . battled his way through hostile lines with urgently needed shells for his gunners, thereby contributing in large measure to the virtual annihilation of a Japanese regiment.

Below: Japanese dead litter the battlefield on the Tenaru, following the battle there on 21 August 1942.
USMC via Real War Photos



(from the sea) on Gavutu around midday on the 7th and ran into a hail of enemy fire. Its commander, Major Robert Williams, was wounded and 32 of his marines killed. Support came from Company B of the 2nd Marines' 1st Battalion, which tried unsuccessfully to storm Tanambogo from Gavutu. During the 8th, following a night of Japanese probes and counter-attacks, the battle swung in the attackers' favour following the landing of the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines. The Japanese abandoned the two islands and the few survivors fled to Florida Island. Marine casualties totalled 144 killed and 194 wounded.

The initial landings in the Solomons had undoubtedly gone well but the naval losses off Savo Island had major repercussions. The defeat convinced Turner that he would have to withdraw his invasion fleet to avoid further losses, effectively leaving the 1st Marine Division on its own until the captured airfield could be completed. On 9 August, the covering warships and supply transports, many of the latter not fully unloaded and with 1,400 marines on board, departed. Many of Vandegrift's men had no more than 17 days' rations left and ammunition supplies were down to just four days. All types of equipment were in short supply and the marines made use of captured Japanese items to reinforce their perimeter. This arched inland some 4,500 metres (5,000 yards) between the Ilu River in the east and the coastal village of Kukum to the west and contained the half completed airfield that US engineers laboured to make operational, a task that allowed the first air units to land on the 20th. The base was named Henderson Field after a Marine aviator killed at the Battle of Midway and air support would prove crucial in the Pacific battles that were to come.

The Japanese responded swiftly to the US landings by sending units piecemeal to Guadalcanal. Underestimating Vandegrift's strength, the high command ordered elements of Lieutenant-General Haruyoshi Hyakutake's Seventeenth Army to destroy the invasion force. First to arrive was the 900-strong forward echelon of the 28th Infantry Regiment under Colonel Kiyono Ichiki, which had been transported from Guam on six destroyers and landed at Taivu Point some 40km (25 miles) to the east of the marines. A patrol from Company A of the 1st Marines' 1st Battalion had a brush with Ichiki's troops close to Taivu on the 19th and the presence of these fresh army troops rather than the usual naval personnel encountered alerted the marines to the new danger.

The following day Sergeant-Major Jacob Vouza, a coastwatcher recently escaped from Japanese captivity, stumbled into the lines of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, at the mouth of the Ilu and reported to its commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Edwin Pollock, that a Japanese attack was to take place that night. Believing they faced slight opposition, Ichiki's men rushed the 1st Battalion's positions at 01.30 on the 21st. They were met by a hail of fire from Pollock's pre-warned marines and were scythed down by canister rounds from 37mm anti-tank guns at close range. As the Japanese wavered, the regiment's 1st Battalion under Lieutenant-Colonel Lenard Cresswell struck their flank. The enemy broke and then fled under strafing runs from Grumman Wildcats based at Henderson Field and fire from a handful of

light tanks. The action, known as the Battle of the Tenaru River, ended at 17.00 hours. Ichiki's forces suffered some 800 men killed out of 900 and their disgraced commander committed suicide. The 1st Marines recorded 34 killed and 75 wounded.

Frequent enemy air attacks on Henderson Field and probes against the marine perimeter confirmed to Vandegrift that the Japanese would mount larger attacks at some point and he strengthened his command by transferring the 1st Raider and 1st Parachute Battalions and the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, from Tulagi to Guadalcanal. The question was: where were the Japanese to strike? A brief landing at Kokumbona to the west of the perimeter by the 5th Marines' 1st Battalion on 27 August failed to find any trace of the enemy. However, it was clear that the Japanese were strengthening their forces on Guadalcanal by landing units under cover of darkness and Major-General Kiyotake Kawaguchi's 35th Infantry Brigade (Reinforced) was ready to assault the 1st Division's perimeter by the second week of September. Kawaguchi intended to move secretly through the dense jungle, establish positions on a grass-covered ridge less than a mile to the south of Henderson Field, and then drive into the heart of Vandegrift's defences at its seemingly weakest point. However, US intelligence was alert to the likelihood of such a move and Vandegrift placed the 1st Raider and 1st Parachute Battalions, both now commanded by Edson, on the ridge during 10 September. Two days later Edson's patrols had their first brushes with Kawaguchi's 2,000-strong assault force.

At 21.00 hours on the 12th the Japanese stormed towards Edson's left flank, charged through a hail of fire, and were only beaten off at bayonet point. Next they tried the right flank and were beaten off. A third attack also failed. Edson had just hung on and by 02.30 on the 13th confirmed the fact to Vandegrift. As the defenders consolidated and improved their positions during the daylight hours, the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, moved up to the ridge. The Japanese attacked again under cover of darkness, bypassing foxholes and emerging in the marines' rear. Fighting was bitter, at close quarters and often hand to hand. The 5th Marines were thrown into the bitter struggle and the 105mm howitzers of the 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, firing at almost point-blank range, cut down waves of the attackers. Finally the Japanese melted away and dawn on the 14th revealed 600 of their dead scattered across the ridge. An estimated 600 more had been wounded. Kawaguchi's brigade had been shattered but the marines had themselves suffered losses of 59 dead, 194 wounded and 10 missing during what became known as the Battle of Bloody Ridge. Edson and Major Kenneth Bailey of the Raiders' Company C received the Congressional Medal of Honor, the latter posthumously. While the Battle of Bloody Ridge was continuing on the 13th and 14th, the Japanese also probed other sections of the perimeter, but met a similar fate. Fighting in the east, the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, called down artillery fire on a Japanese force moving through tall grass and accounted for 200 of the enemy, while to the west, the 5th Marines' 3rd Battalion comprehensively blocked a drive down the island's coast road.

Morale, already high following the Bloody Ridge action, received a further boost on the 18th, when the 7th Marines, the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, and support units arrived at Guadalcanal. Much-needed supplies of aviation fuel, ammunition and rations were also landed. The sick and wounded were evacuated, including the survivors of the 1st Parachute Battalion, which had been virtually destroyed. With these fresh forces available, Vandegrift had some 19,200 men under orders and he set about reorganizing his defences, dividing the perimeter into 10 sectors, each of which was the responsibility



Above: A photo laboratory built by the Japanese being used by US Marines, 15 April 1942. *USMC via Real War Photos*

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR to PLATOON SERGEANT MITCHELL PAIGE, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS, for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

... while serving with the Second Battalion, Seventh Marines, First Marine Division, in combat against enemy Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands Area on October 26, 1942. When the enemy broke through the line directly in front of his position, Platoon Sergeant Paige, commanding a machine-gun section with fearless determination, continued to direct the fire of his gunners until all his men were either killed or wounded. Alone, against the deadly hail of Japanese shells, he manned his gun, and when it was destroyed, took over another, moving from gun to gun, never ceasing his withering fire against the advancing hordes until reinforcements finally arrived. Then, forming a new line, he dauntlessly and aggressively led a bayonet charge, driving the enemy back and preventing a break through in our lines ...



Above: The original caption reads, 'One of the hardest Easter Sunday tasks for these Guadalcanal Marines was the visit to the green-crossed cemetery where their buddies were buried.' The US forces lost 1,592 killed at Guadalcanal. *USMC via Real War Photos*

of a regiment. Under the tutelage of Colonel William Whaling, a jungle expert and marksman, groups of marines were taught the finer points of scouting and sniping. As the Japanese continued to despatch troops piecemeal into the battle by way of the naval transports of what was nicknamed the 'Tokyo Express', the marines carried out aggressive patrols in force to improve their position by securing the eastern bank of the Matanikau River to the west of the original perimeter. On the 24th Lieutenant-Colonel Lewis Puller's 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, encountered Japanese troops on Mount Austen to the south-west, killed and wounded 32, and then proceeded northward along the Matanikau with the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, to reach the coast two days later. Attempts on the 27th to establish positions on the west bank by these forces, which were supported by the 1st Raider Battalion, were blocked by the enemy, but prisoners taken from the newly arrived 2nd Division under Major-General Masao Maruyama confirmed that the Japanese were again building up their forces on Guadalcanal.

Below: Marines march past B-17 Flying Fortresses on Henderson Field. *USMC via Real War Photos*



In early October Vandegrift sent five of his battalions, the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 5th Marines, and the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 7th Marines, together with Whaling's scouts against the Matanikau to dislocate the Japanese build up near his perimeter. After fierce firefights on the 7th and 9th, the enemy were cleared from the river banks, losing some 700 men. Marine casualties totalled 65 killed and 125 wounded. Despite this defeat the Japanese continued to land troops for a major attack against Vandegrift's command, and on 7 October Hyakutake arrived to take personal charge of the forthcoming offensive. The marines, many increasingly suffering from various tropical diseases, also received a much-needed boost to

their strength with the arrival of the Americal Division's 164th Infantry Regiment on the 13th. The regiment received a warm welcome – that night two Japanese battleships, *Kongo* and *Haruna*, and land-based artillery bombarded the marine positions and Henderson Field to cover further troop landings.

Some of Maruyama's 7,000 men began to probe the US defences on the 20th. Lieutenant-Colonel William McKelvy's 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, positioned along the Matanikau beat off an attack spearheaded by a pair of tanks and repeated the feat the following day. A far greater threat developed on the 23rd, when an artillery and mortar bombardment on McKelvy's positions heralded an attack by nine medium tanks. Eight were quickly knocked out by 37mm anti-tank guns and the ninth disabled by a grenade before being finished off by a half-track mounting a 75mm gun. The accompanying infantry were blasted by intense fire from the 11th Marines' artillery and a further three tanks were put out of commission. The main Japanese attack by six battalions was unleashed against Bloody Ridge and an area of flat ground to its east, a sector held by Puller's 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, on the night of 24–25 October. Puller's line buckled but did not break, partly due to the timely arrival of the 3rd Battalion, 164th Infantry Regiment, and the enemy withdrew at dawn. The lull was temporary as the Japanese launched themselves against the perimeter for the second time on the following night. Rifles, machine guns, mortars, 37mm anti-tank guns and heavy artillery blasted the Japanese ranks throughout the night. US positions were infiltrated but the enemy lodgments were dealt with one by one. The battle ended at dawn on the 26th. Maruyama's command had been decimated, with 3,500 of his men killed, while the marine and US Army units recorded 300 men killed and wounded.

As further reinforcements swelled Vandegrift's command in late October and early November, he determined to clear the enemy from the west bank of the Matanikau to dislocate any future Japanese operations. Between 1 and 3 November a large pocket of enemy troops was destroyed at Point Cruz at the mouth of the river, but a battalion of the 7th Marines reconnoitring toward Kili Point to the east of the US perimeter encountered a newly landed regiment of the 38th Division and needed reinforcements to beat off the Japanese. The running fight lasted until the 11th by which time the Japanese had suffered 450 dead, while marines and soldiers recorded 40 dead and 120 wounded. Events at sea now undermined Japanese efforts against Vandegrift's growing command. The Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, fought between the 12th and 15th, produced heavy losses on both sides, but only 4,000 of the 13,000 Japanese troops being transported to the island managed to land and their accompanying warships had suffered irreplaceable losses.

While the Japanese struggled to prepare for another push on Henderson Field, Vandegrift was informed by Turner that his tired and disease-stricken 1st Division was to be relieved by the US Army's 25th Infantry Division and that overall command of the land operation would be transferred to Major-General Alexander Patch. Vandegrift was also told that the marine division was to leave all of its heavy equipment behind. The decision was confirmed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the 29th. On 7 December, two days before he departed the island, Vandegrift sent a message to the marines recalling their 'unbelievable achievements had made "Guadalcanal" a synonym for death and disaster in the language of our enemy.' The 1st Marine Division, like its commander, departed for Australia over the following days, leaving behind 681 dead. Some 3,200 of the survivors were suffering from malaria and the remainder had various other tropical ailments. All were exhausted and the whole division needed rest, re-equipping and a steady flow of replacements to bring it back to full combat readiness. The process would eventually take 12 months but by the beginning of December 1943 the division was considered fit for further action. It was destined to return to the south-west Pacific.

JACOB CHARLES VOUZA

Sergeant-Major Vouza, who was born on Guadalcanal in 1900, served as part of the Solomons Islands Armed Constabulary for 25 years before his retirement in 1941. Following the Japanese occupation of the island, he served with the British forces as a coastwatcher, taking note of the movement of enemy shipping. His local knowledge and scouting skills were next put to good use by the 1st Marine Division following the August landings on Guadalcanal. However, Vouza was captured by the Japanese on the 27th. Refusing to divulge any information, he was tied to a tree and brutally interrogated for hours but still revealed nothing. Left for dead with bayonet wounds across his body, he nevertheless managed to escape and return to the division's lines, where he was able to forewarn the Marines of an impending Japanese attack. This was decisively repulsed. After 12 days in hospital Vouza returned to service as the division's chief scout. Among many of his missions was a successful 30-day period behind enemy lines with Lieutenant Evans Carlson's 2nd Raider Battalion during the following November and December. (See also page 22.)

Vouza was highly decorated. He received the Silver Star from Major-General Alexander Vandegrift for refusing to break under Japanese torture and was awarded the Legion of Merit for his period with Carlson's battalion. The British granted Vouza the George Medal for devotion to duty and the Police Long Service Medal. In 1957 he was made a Member of the British Empire (MBE) and in 1979 he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. He also maintained his connections with the 1st Marine Division and in 1968 was a guest of the division's association. Vouza died in 1984.

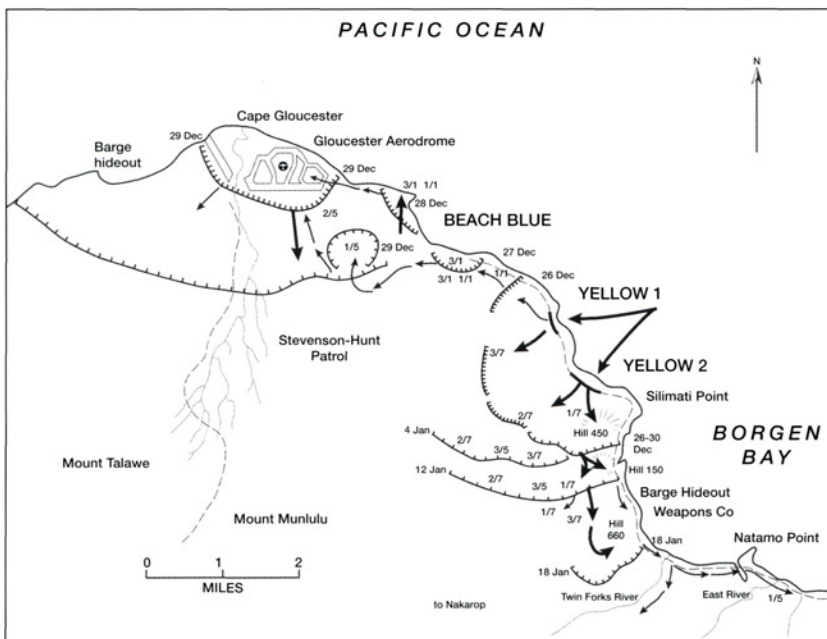
NEW BRITAIN

During 1943 the US strategy in the South-west Pacific centred on a two-pronged push, the first north-west across the central and northern Solomon Islands and the second northward through Papua and New Guinea. The ultimate objective of both was New Britain, which contained Rabaul, a vital Japanese naval and air base that effectively blocked any northward advance beyond the Solomons. As part of this strategy, the overall command of Halsey's South Pacific Area forces, renamed the US Third Fleet, was temporarily transferred from Nimitz to MacArthur. Halsey's task, under MacArthur's direction, was to engage Japanese naval and air forces in the Solomons and undertake a series of leap-frogging amphibious assaults on enemy-held islands that would take his command ever closer to eastern New Britain. Meanwhile, MacArthur's parallel advance to the west was designed to leap-frog along the coast of Papua and New Guinea as a prelude to an amphibious assault on western New Britain. The combined operation by MacArthur and Halsey, which was agreed in late April, was given the code name Elkton. By August, following a series of successful landings and the ongoing destruction of a greater part of Japan's naval and air resources, it was decided that Rabaul itself could be isolated, left to wither on the vine, rather than taken by direct assault. However, western New Britain was still considered a prime target, not least because of the Japanese airfields it contained.

Above right: Excellent view of the New Britain invasion and seven landing ships. USMC via Real War Photos

Below right: One of a sequence of photographs (see also photo page 31) of the landings on New Britain. This shows a tractor pulling a 3in gun; following the artillery piece are infantry armed mainly with the M1 carbine and Thompson sub-machine gun. USMC via Real War Photos

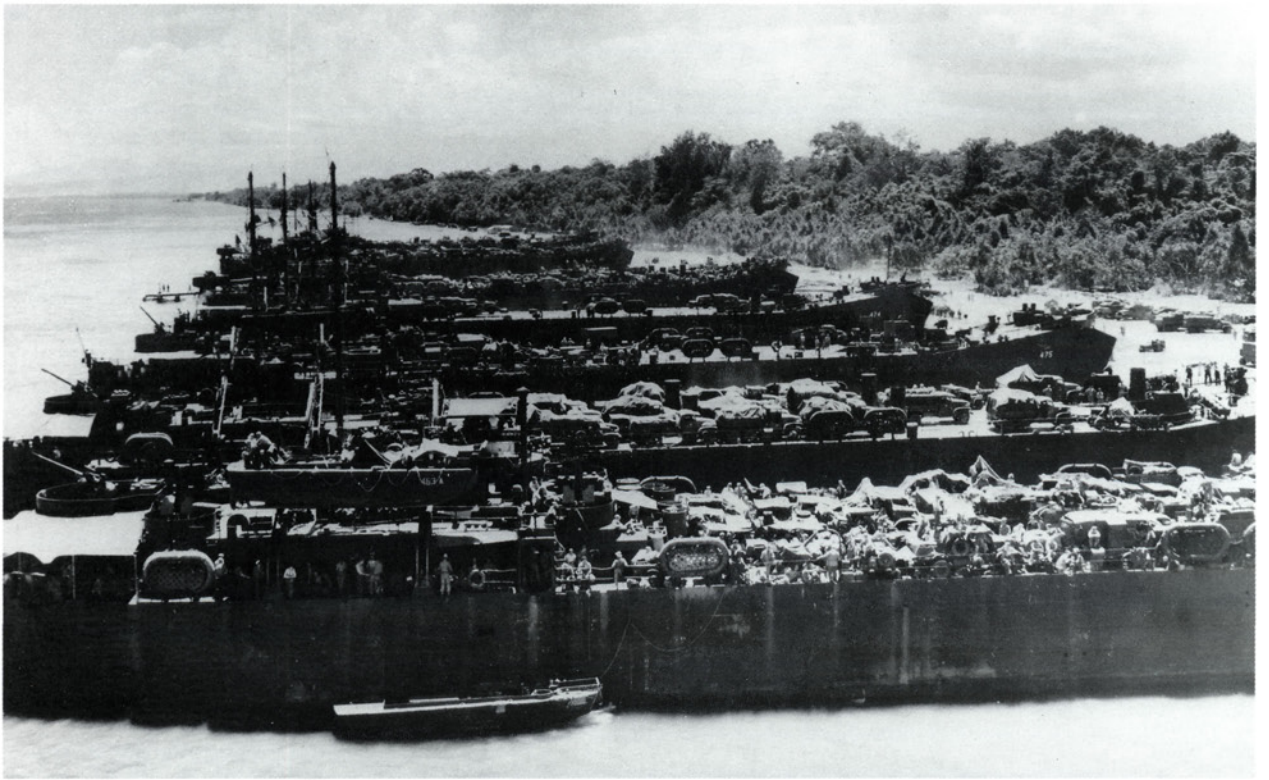
Below: Map of New Britain showing the positions from the landings to 18 January. USMC via Real War Photos



The proposed landings on western New Britain, code-named Cartwheel, underwent several modifications before the final details were agreed on 15 December, a mere 11 days before the 1st Division was supposed to land. As a diversion, there was a preliminary landing at Arawe on the south-west coast by elements of the 1st Cavalry Division on the 11th. Meanwhile the 1st Marine Division was to be transported to the target beaches. The main assault was to be led by Combat Team C based on the 7th Marines, which was to come ashore at Borgen Bay a short distance from Cape Gloucester on the north-west coast of the island. Once a beachhead perimeter had been secured Combat Team B, centred on the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 1st Marines, had the task of advancing on a nearby Japanese airfield. The 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, was to

conduct a landing at Tauuli some 19km (12 miles) away on the opposite side of Cape Gloucester and then establish blocking positions on the main road to prevent any Japanese troops on the cape escaping or halt any reinforcements attempting to reach them.

The opening assault on 26 December by Combat Team C was expected to be opposed but the commander of the Japanese forces in western New Britain, General Shinjiro Komori, had few men in the area of Borgen Bay as he believed the local terrain behind the beaches – dense jungle and swamp – was all but impassable. The marines found the going tough; men disappeared up to the thighs in the mud and water or became entangled in root systems hidden below the surface. The supporting bombardment only churned up the ground more and brought rotten trees



Right: Mobile artillery — *LST-202* disgorges a 75mm Gun Motor Carriage M3 on the beach at Cape Gloucester, New Britain. The first batch of these vehicles was produced in October 1941 and rushed to the Pacific where they proved extremely effective. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Below: Another view of *LST-202* during the Cape Gloucester landings. Here the cargo is an M4A1 Sherman. An 'LST-1' class tank landing ship, *USS LST-202* was laid down on 15 July 1942 at the Chicago Bridge & Iron Co., Seneca, IL. Launched on 16 March 1943, she was commissioned on 9 April 1943. After the Cape Gloucester operation, *LST-202* saw extensive service and earned five battle stars culminating in the Leyte landings of October and November 1944. Involved in occupation duty until early November 1945, *LST-202* was finally decommissioned on 11 April 1946. *LST-204*, visible in the background, earned seven battle stars, seeing action at the Mindanao Island landings of March 1945. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Opposite, above: Christmas Eve 1943: Marines prepare for the New Britain assault. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Opposite, below: Divine service for marines and men of the US Coastguard on the crowded deck of an LST en route to Cape Gloucester. *USMC via Real War Photos*





crashing to the ground – the first US fatality of the landings was a man crushed by a falling tree.

The marines struggled through the swamp in the face of only sporadic enemy fire and were able to establish a perimeter on dry ground some 700 metres (800 yards) inland. Combat Team B now began to move out from the perimeter and the 1st Marines almost immediately ran into the first serious resistance, which centred on a complex of four bunkers connected by camouflaged trenches. The position proved difficult to neutralize as bazooka rounds simply ploughed into the soft earth without detonating, while flame-throwers were rendered ineffective by the dampness. An accompanying tracked landing vehicle was sent against the position but stuck fast between two trees and two of its crew were killed. The driver kept his head, freed the vehicle, and crushed the bunker under its tracks. The accompanying marines then cleared the rest of the complex with their rifles and grenades. Twenty-five Japanese soldiers were killed in the brief firefight but the marines also recorded seven dead and an equal number wounded.

The 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, had an easier time landing at Tauli. Preceded by fire from warships, aircraft and rocket-firing landing vessels, the landings were unopposed. Several abandoned enemy bunkers were checked as the marines pushed inland and established a perimeter some 457m (500 yards) inland that severed the coast road by nightfall. However, the battalion was not immediately able to inform Rupertus of its success as radio transmissions to Borgen Bay were inhibited by the intervening Mount Talawe. Radio communications were set up by the morning of the 27th and the other battalions of the 1st Marines were allowed to begin their push on the enemy airfield. By the onset of darkness they had advanced some 5km (3 miles) along the line of the coast road toward the objective.

Although their response to the initial landings had been uncoordinated and generally weak, Japanese resistance steadily grew in intensity. On the night of the 27th–28th, they launched an attack against the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, which was holding a sector of the main beach-head's perimeter, with the intention of isolating the 1st Marine

Right: Another view of the New Britain landings (see lower photo on page 27). Note the number of Thompson sub-machine guns carried — three by the Marines at right of the picture. Unlike the Germans who made ready use of the MP38 machine-pistol, at the start of the war, both the United States and British armies had few SMGs in service. All this changed after the fall of France and orders totalling well over 100,000 had been received by Thompson by the end of 1940. The three visible here are M1s with 20-round magazines. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Below: View from the bridge of *LST-202* en route for New Britain. One can just make out the forward armament; an LST carried a single 3in/50 gun mount, five 40mm gun mounts, six 20mm gun mounts, two .50-cal machine guns and four .30-cal machine guns. *USMC via Real War Photos*



battalions moving against the airfield. The marines prevented any penetration of their perimeter and killed around 200 of the Japanese. On the 28th the marines at Borgen Bay began their move against the Cape Gloucester airfield. Around midday, as the 1st Marines were moving on the objective, they were hit by intense machine-gun and mortar fire from a road block of a dozen well-concealed bunkers manned by around 250 Japanese troops. The battle for what was later nicknamed Hell's Point was intense. The attackers deployed three tanks to shatter the bunkers one by one at close range and then individual squads of marines dealt with the survivors. For nine men killed and 36 wounded, the marines had killed some 270 of the Japanese and dealt with the only major obstacle between them and the airfield. On the 29th the main assault against the airfield was launched. Erupting out of the dense jungle along the eastern edge of the airfield the marines were able to deploy in textbook fashion across an expanse of grassland. Supported by armour and artillery fire, the marines swept across the target zone, meeting minimal opposition. The airfield soon fell; just three marines had been wounded in taking the key target.

The fighting to secure the airfield fully was far from over. The Japanese tasked with protecting the base had melted away into the surrounding area, particularly into the foothills to the south. On the 30th furious counter-attacks were launched against the marines around the airfield and at the blocking position on the opposite side of

Cape Gloucester. The 1st Marines in particular had a stiff fight in what was nicknamed the 'Battle of Coffin Corner', killing 100 Japanese and driving off the remainder of the force trying to break through their road-block. Japanese losses were heavy elsewhere and their defeat allowed the airfield to be declared secure. MacArthur announced its capture to the US public as a present for New Year's Day, although the value of the airfield was debatable. Already pounded by US aircraft, its cratered runways and battered facilities were strewn with the wreckage of around 30 Japanese planes. The Japanese, still holding out nearby, now bombarded the area, adding to the destruction. US engineers struggled to repair the damage due to the enemy fire, and the monsoon rains added to their





Above: Stretchers are unloaded onto the New Britain shoreline. Each of the USMC divisions had a medical battalion (1st Division's was the 1st) that would be split in combat as part of the combat groups — thus a medical company would be attached to each group. *USMC via Real War Photos*

difficulties as their heavy equipment stuck fast in thick mud. The base was only declared operational in mid-February.

The capture of the airfield did not end Japanese resistance in western New Britain as the high ground they held allowed them to fire on both the airfield and beachhead. The marines therefore prepared to attack the key to the area — Hill 660, 3.2km (2 miles) south of the Borgen Bay landing beaches. However, the approach to the objective was far from easy as the attackers had to negotiate a series of jungle-covered ridges before tackling the hill itself. The advance began on 2 January 1944, and progressed slowly. Japanese positions, expertly concealed and difficult to spot at anything but close range, had to be neutralized. In a series of sharp encounters over the following days, the marines captured a number of key points, such as Suicide Creek, Target Hill, and Aogiri Ridge,

which opened the way for the planned assault on Hill 660. On the 12th the hill was pounded by aircraft, artillery and mortar fire to soften up the defences for the main attack — but many of the Japanese were left untouched in their solidly constructed bunkers.

The 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, led the push on Hill 660 on the next day. The first drive was up the hill's north-west slope but was stopped in its tracks by the Japanese and the marines made little progress. Hope came from the south side of the position where a detachment of men commanded by Captain Joseph Buckley had been sent with a bulldozer to build a road block to prevent the Japanese from escaping. On the morning of the 14th the main assault force to the north-west stormed up the hill and captured its crest. The Japanese abandoned their positions and attempted to flee; many were cut down at Buckley's road block. Numerous brief and furious skirmishes occurred over





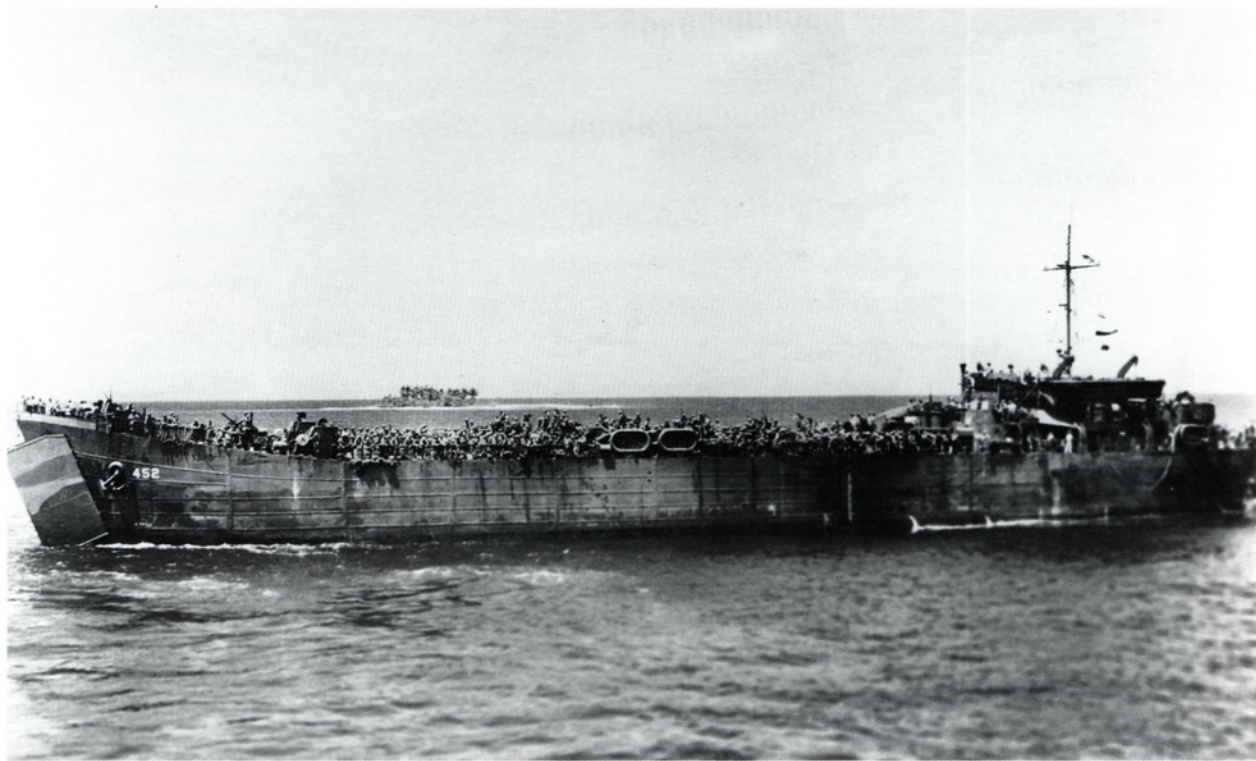
Above: The turn of the ambulances and jeeps to leave the landing ships. *USMC via Real War Photos*

the following days as the marines conducted mopping-up operations, but on the 16th the Japanese launched a much larger counter-attack against the expanded US perimeter. Again Hill 660 was the centre of the fight, much of which was at close quarters. Aided by mortar fire the marines were able to beat off the Japanese, effectively ending enemy hopes of retaking the position. The battle for Hill 660 had cost the division 50 casualties, while Japanese losses totalled around 200 men.

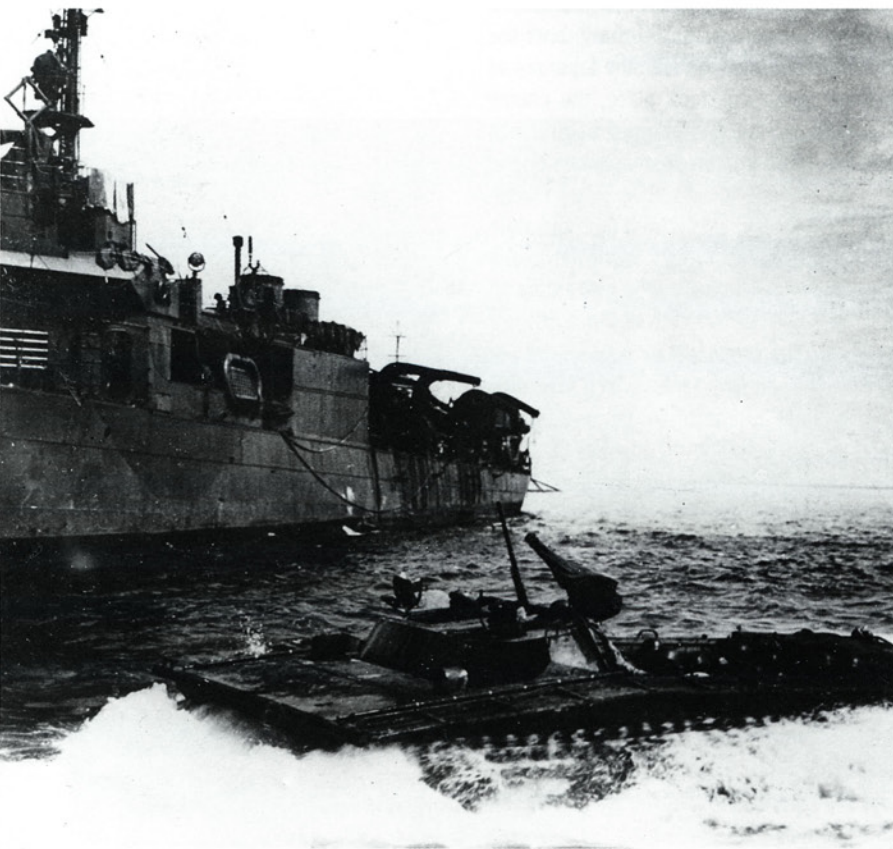
The taking of Hill 660 ensured that the beachhead and airfield were secure and the marines now began to move across the island's western half, conducting small-scale raids, or reconnoitring nearby islands. For example, elements of the 1st Marines landed on Umboi Island between New Britain and New Guinea on 20 February, and the regiment's 1st Battalion spent the period 11–18 March skirmishing with the Japanese at Linga Linga Plantation on Eleanora Bay. As these operations took place, the enemy resistance on New Britain began to crumble. By 5 March the 5th Marines had pushed eastward to the base of Willaumez Peninsula, which juts out into the Bismarck Sea on the north coast of New Britain. The peninsula and the Japanese airfield at Talasea were important objectives. If the enemy could be beaten and the airfield secured then the main route from south and west New Britain to Rabaul in the east would be closed to the Japanese. Rather than advance overland up the peninsula, it was decided to conduct an amphibious assault directly against the airfield. The 5th Marines were ordered to carry out the operation, which opened at dawn on the 6th. The proposed air support did not arrive and the marines had to rely on support fire from their own tanks, which fired over the lowered ramps of their landing craft during the final approach. On landing the 1st Battalion established a defensive perimeter and the 2nd Battalion then began the drive on Talasea but quickly ran into heavy enemy mortar and machine-gun fire. Tanks were used at close range to destroy the Japanese bunkers, but progress was slow, partly due to the difficult terrain. Talasea was reached on the 9th, but pockets of resistance still had to be dealt with.

On the following day the marines finally secured Talasea and its vital airfield. A total contrast from the fetid swamps and jungle at Cape Gloucester, one marine described his arrival in the area and the sight of its neat village as 'like finding heaven in hell'. There was still some Japanese resistance to be dealt with but the tempo of the battle declined to such an extent that the division was able to undertake a seven-week training programme. By the end of the division's stint on New Britain, when the marines were replaced by the US Army's 40th Infantry Division, they had been on the island for 131 days and recorded casualty figures of 310 men killed and 1,083 wounded. The Japanese

Far left: Aerial view of the bombing of Rabaul, New Britain, 22 March 1944, one of some 30,000 sorties made against this important base. It was the strategic importance of Rabaul in the defence of Australia that made it such a vital part of Allied planning. It was very well defended and the Japanese garrison would hold out until 6 September 1945, when 90,000 surrendered — although by that time all thoughts of an attack on Australia had been forgotten. *USMC via Real War Photos*



Above: The crowded decks of 'LST-451' class tank landing ship USS *LST-452*. Laid down on 20 July 1942 by Kaiser, Inc. of Vancouver, Washington, *LST-452* was launched on 10 October 1942, commissioned on 16 January 1943 and first saw action in the occupation of Lae in September 1943. Its last operation was on Balikpapan in June–July 1945. After the war, *LST-452* saw service in China until mid-May 1946, and was decommissioned on 12 June 1946. *LST-452* earned seven battle stars and the Navy Unit Commendation for World War II service. *USMC via Real War Photos*



Left: An LVT-4 —Landing Vehicle Tracked — in the sea during exercises prior to the landings on New Britain. The LVT series of Amtracs stemmed from an original amphibian design — the Alligator — for the Florida Everglades by Donald Roebling. Over 18,500 LVTs of all types would see service with US forces during World War II. The first type was the LVT-1, produced in time to see service at Guadalcanal; next came the improved LVT-2 and then the LVT-4, that saw the Continental engine moved to the front and a ramp added at the back so that the infantry didn't have to dismount over the sides. The LVT-3 was a Cadillac-engined version of the LVT-4. For more information on the Amtracs see the captions on page 43. *TRH Pictures*

Right: Marines waded through the surf during the Cape Gloucester landings. *TRH/US Navy*





later reported their own losses as 3,868 men killed. More importantly for US strategy, western New Britain was now clear of Japanese forces and the sizeable enemy garrison at Rabaul was effectively isolated and powerless. The seizure of western New Britain also prevented Japanese attacks on US shipping in the Vitaz Strait between the Solomon and Bismarck Seas, thereby securing an area vital to the next stage of MacArthur's drive towards the Philippines from the South-west Pacific.

The division left New Britain in late April and sailed for Pavuvu in the Russell Islands some 105km (65 miles) off the north-west coast of Guadalcanal, which had been overrun against minimal opposition during Operation Cleanslate in February 1943. Although selected as the division's forward base the area was less than perfect for tired and sick men. The island was far from the tropical ideal; it was swamp infested, frequently deluged by heavy rain, and facilities were basic – food, medical facilities and recreational opportunities were meagre. Equally, the island and its immediate neighbours were unsuited for the conduct of amphibious training to bring the division and its new drafts of replacements back up to full effectiveness. Even so the sojourn on the Russells lasted for some five months. On 26 August, the division transferred to the area around Cape Esperance on Guadalcanal to practise amphibious landings. Within a few weeks it was to undertake one of the most bloody but comparatively little known assaults of the whole Pacific campaign at Peleliu.

THE BATTLE FOR PELELIU

Operation Stalemate II, the plan for the 1st Marine Division to occupy Peleliu, one of the Palau Islands in the South-west Pacific, was controversial. Many senior US planning staff believed that the Palaus, lying about 1,280km (800 miles) south-east of the Philippines, could be safely bypassed and that their capture was not a vital prerequisite for the forthcoming landings in the Philippines by MacArthur. Indeed, Halsey's Fifth Fleet had met little resistance in the Caroline island group of which the Palaus are part, and inflicted such severe losses on the Japanese in early September that he reported to Nimitz that the landings on Peleliu and the neighbouring island of Angaur to the south were unnecessary and that the Philippine assault could safely be brought forward.

However, Nimitz and MacArthur had previously taken the opposite view – that the capture of the island was essential – and the imminent Peleliu operation went ahead. The island, which air reconnaissance had suggested was only lightly defended, had an airfield that could be used to support the recapture of the Philippines. It has also been suggested that inter-service rivalries and politics played a part in the decision. Nimitz did not want to put the 1st Marine Division under MacArthur's command for the Philippines operation. He had already had difficulty in regaining control of the division after the Cape Gloucester campaign, when it had been a temporary part of MacArthur's command, and did not want to repeat the experience. Deploying the division to Peleliu would certainly prohibit its future use in the Philippines. Whatever the truth of the matter Vice-Admiral Theodore Wilkinson's 3rd Amphibious Force had been ordered to prepare for Stalemate II, which was scheduled for 15 September 1944. Major-General Roy Geiger's III Amphibious Corps (formerly I Amphibious Corps), consisting of the reinforced 1st Marine Division and the US Army's 81st Infantry Division, were earmarked for the landings – at Peleliu and Angaur respectively.

The Japanese saw the 72km (45-mile) long Palau archipelago as a minor component in their distant defensive chain around the Philippines, but that did not mean they would surrender the islands without a fight. The Palaus were entrusted to Lieutenant-General Sadai Inoue's 14th Infantry Division and he opted to make Peleliu the cornerstone of his

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the FIRST MARINE DIVISION (REINFORCED) for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

For extraordinary heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces at Peleliu and Ngesebus from September 15 to 29, 1944. Landing over a treacherous coral reef against hostile mortar and artillery fire, the FIRST Marine Division, Reinforced, seized a narrow, heavily mined beachhead and advanced foot by foot in the face of relentless enfilade fire through rain-forests and mangrove swamps toward the air strip, the key to the enemy defenses of the southern Palaus. Opposed all the way by thoroughly disciplined, veteran Japanese troops entrenched in caves and in reinforced concrete pillboxes which honeycombed the high ground throughout the island, the officers and men of the Division fought with undiminished spirit and courage despite heavy losses, exhausting heat and difficult terrain, seizing and holding a highly strategic air and land base for future operations in the Western Pacific. By their individual acts of heroism, their aggressiveness and their fortitude, the men of the FIRST Marine Division, Reinforced, upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

For the President,
JOHN L. SULLIVAN
Secretary of the Navy

Left: This remarkable photograph shows the deck of *LST-202* as it neared New Britain. Apart from the men, the numerous trucks, jeeps and trailers carry supplies, POL and other essentials — from rolls of barbed wire to drinking water. With a displacement of 1,780 tons, and a complement of 8–10 officers and 100–115 men, craft such as this could carry some 140 men and six LCVPs. See exploded diagram on page 16.

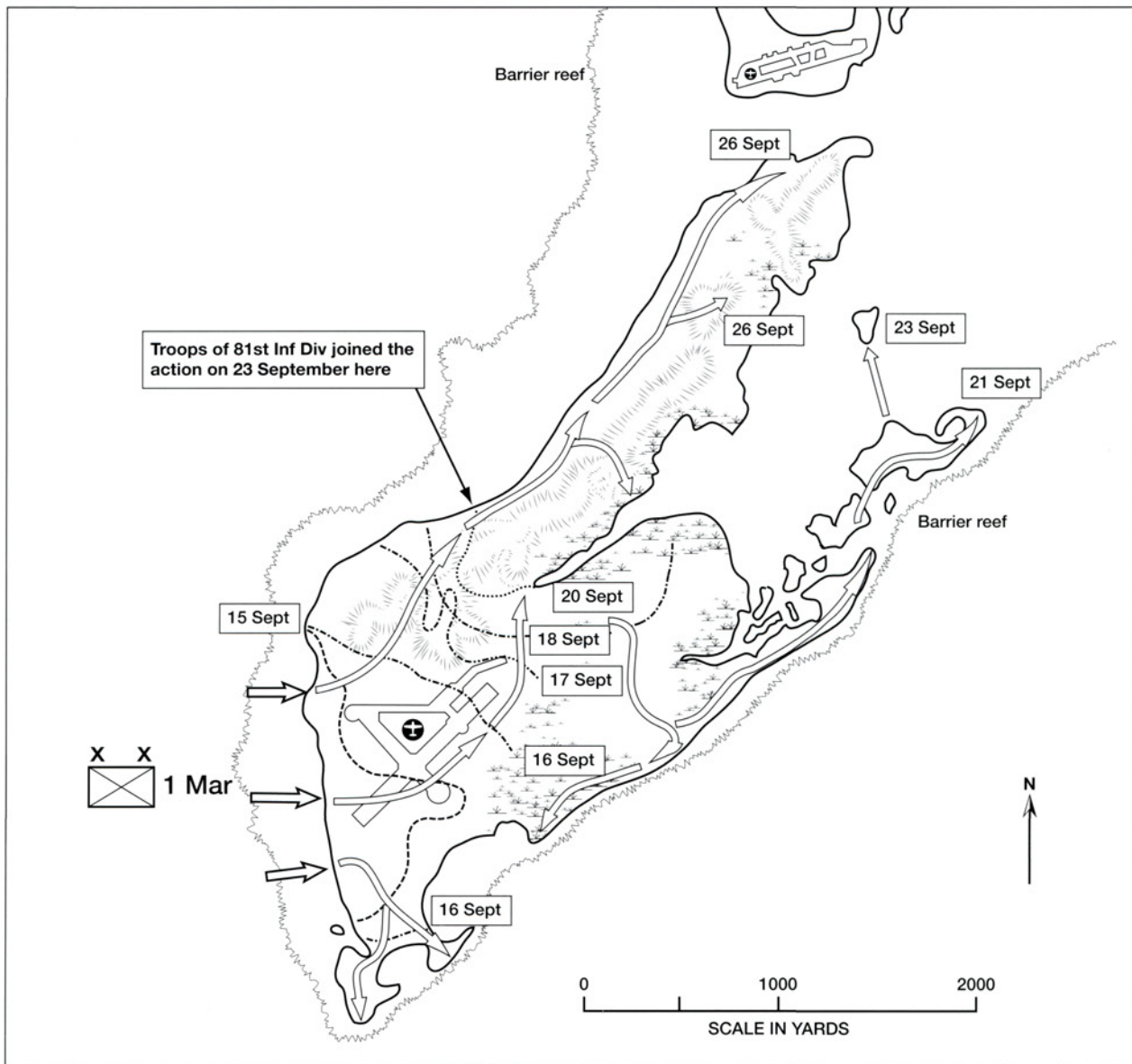
USMC via Real War Photos

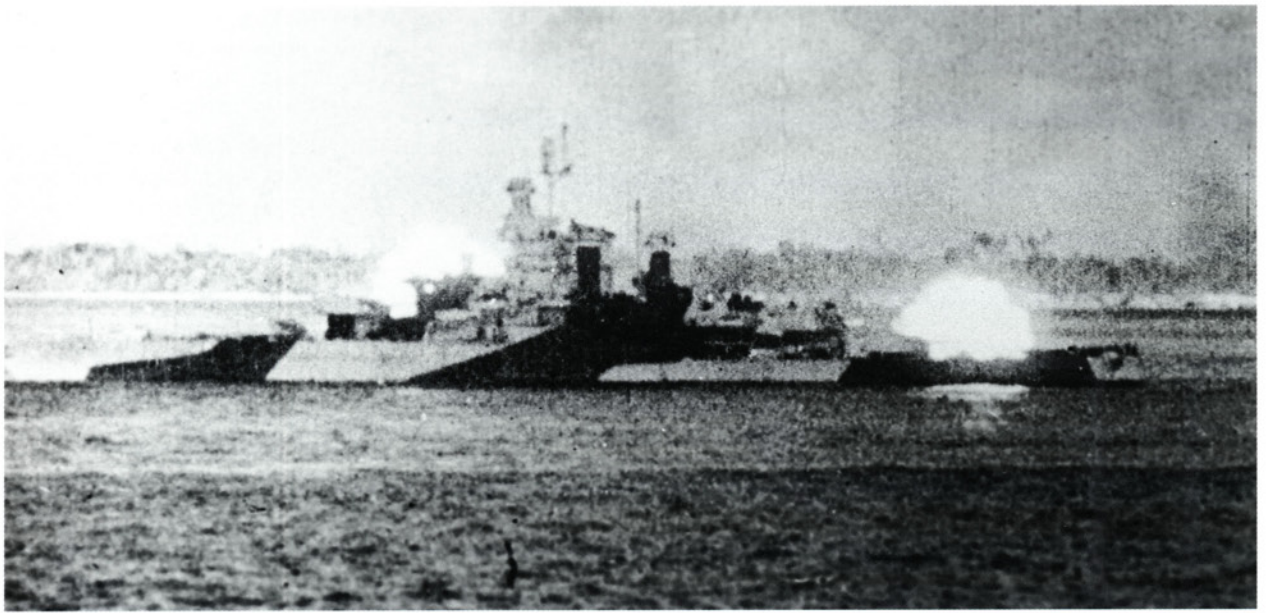
Right: USS *Tennessee* (BB-43) fires a salvo at Japanese shore positions prior to the invasion of Peleliu. USMC via Real War Photos

Below right: D-Day, Peleliu, 15 September 1944. Marines of the 1st Division head for the smoke-covered shore. USMC via Real War Photos

Below: The invasion of Peleliu between 15 and 26 September 1944. It would take until the end of November to finally destroy enemy forces holding cave and underground positions in the Umurborgol pocket.

defensive plans. He intended to hold it for as long as possible to delay US operations against the Philippines and in the process kill as many of the attackers as possible. Peleliu's garrison was commanded by Colonel Kunio Nakagawa and he had around 10,500 men, many of them veterans of the campaign in China, to hold the island's defences. These were drawn from the 2nd Infantry Regiment, two battalions of the 15th Infantry Regiment, a battalion of the 53rd Independent Mixed Brigade and a tank battalion as well as naval, artillery, anti-aircraft, and labour detachments. The island was split into four defensive zones. In a manner that was to become familiar in the last campaigns of the Pacific war, Nakagawa also adopted the tactic of holding his main forces back from the landing beaches and placing them in a warren of defensive positions in the central and northern sectors of the island. In these areas, the natural terrain of coral limestone ridges, caves and gulleys made ideal strongpoints. The true physical nature of the 10km long and 3km wide (6 x 2 miles) island had not been detected by US air









Above: LCI (R)-77 and -78 send salvos of rockets towards Peleliu. The LCI (Rocket) was designed to provide supporting naval gunfire and could fire as many as 600 4.5in rockets on one rocket run into the beach. With a speed of 14.4kts and a complement of 40, these vessels had 12 multiple launchers on each side. *USMC via Real War Photos*



Left: Aerial view of Anguar Island that was attacked by Major General Paul Mueller's 81st Infantry Division. When 1st Division encountered a stronger defence than anticipated, a regiment of the 81st reinforced the marines on 23 September and assisted in the conquest of Peleliu, fighting on against dug-in Japanese troops for at least a month after the last marine of 1st Division had left the island. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Opposite, above and below: Zero hour! The 1st Division attacks go in. The smoke on the water comes from craft hit by the Japanese defenders. Note the surf breaking on the barrier reef that surrounded the island, and the clearing around the airfield runways inland. *USMC via Real War Photos*





A spread of photographs showing Amtracs in action during the invasion of Peleliu.

Above: Marines huddle in the back of an LVT-2 on its way towards White Beach. *TRH/USMC*

Left: 81st Infantry Division troops in LVT-2s during the attack on Angaur Island. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Opposite, above: LVT (A)-4 amphibious tanks, armed with M8 75mm turrets, head towards Angaur. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Opposite, below: Good view of an LVT-2 on its way to the beaches of Peleliu. Capable of carrying 25 soldiers, this one looks a little light. Note the engine is at the back and there is no ramp forcing the Marines to dismount over the sides — this would not be improved until the LVT-4. Note, too, the .50in AA and .30in machine guns. In the background is LST-452. *USMC via Real War Photos*



PELELIU

Under Major-General William H. Rupertus's command were:

1st Marine

CO Col Lewis B. 'Chesty' Puller

5th Marine

CO Col Harold D. 'Bucky' Harris

7th Marine

Col Herman H. Hanneken

11th Marine

Col William H. Harrison

Armored Amphibious Tractor Group

CO Lt-Col Kimber H. Boyer

Amphibious Transport Group

CO Maj Albert F. Reutlinger

Anti-Aircraft Group

CO Lt-Col Merlyn D. Holmes

Engineer Group

CO Col Francis I. Fenton

Shore Party Group

CO Lt-Col Robert G. Ballance

Service Group

CO Col John Kaluf

Reserve Group

CO Lt-Col Spencer Berger

Medical Group

CO Cdr Emil E. Napp

reconnaissance due to thick forest cover. Rupertus, the 1st Marine Division's commander, stated that the operation would be 'rough but fast' but was right on only one count. The struggle for Peleliu was to last from mid-September to late November, with his men bearing the brunt of the bitter combat.

The softening up process against Peleliu's garrison began on 12 September and was scheduled to last for three days. Naval gunfire from five battleships, four heavy cruisers, and three light cruisers was supported by strikes from aircraft based on three large and five light carriers. In total the US Navy unleashed some 520 16in and 1850 14in shells on the designated targets, while the aircraft added 1,800 500lb bombs and 74,000 .50-calibre rounds to the total. The barrage ended a day early, on the 14th, as Rear Admiral Jesse Oldendorf, the task force commander, believed that the defences had been neutralized. He reported: 'We have run out of targets.' Many of the bombardment vessels then departed to play their part in the upcoming invasion of the Philippines.

D-Day for Peleliu was the 15th and the assault plan involved all of the division's three regiments landing on a 3km (two-mile) stretch of the island's south-western beaches. Colonel Lewis Puller's 1st Marines were to land on the left flank, where the landing points were designated White 1 and White 2, and then drive to the north-west. Colonel Harold Harris's 5th Marines were tasked with taking Orange 1 and 2 beaches in the centre before heading to the eastern shore. In the process they were to capture the airfield and then head to the north-east. The 7th Marines under Colonel Herman Hanneken were to come ashore on the right at Orange 3 beach and then move to the southern end of the island. The invasion began at 05.50 hours on the 15th with 15 minutes of preparatory naval gunfire and then attacks by support aircraft. At 07.50 rocket-launching landing craft sailed close to the coral reefs and pounded the zone around the landing beaches as the Amtracs carrying the first assault waves begin to head for the shore. The Japanese defenders, many of them entirely unscathed from the preliminary bombardments, opened a withering fire on the assault vehicles. In the first ten minutes 26 were badly hit, and 60 were destroyed or damaged in the first 90 minutes. Despite the casualties, the first marines reached the beaches at 08.32 and 6,000 were ashore within three hours.

Puller's men faced the stiffest task of the first day in securing the left flank. The 3rd Battalion's K Company bore the brunt of the combat. Quickly cut off and surrounded, the marines fought a three-day battle to secure a coral promontory known as 'The Point', suffering 33 per cent casualties to secure the position. Other men of the 1st Marines pushed their way through the island's mangrove swamps to help secure the airfield, the key first-day objective, in support of the 5th Marines. The 7th Marines began their allotted task of clearing the southern end of Peleliu. Strong Japanese resistance was made worse by high temperatures, lack of shade and the strict rationing of water – no more than two canteens per man initially. Japanese resistance intensified as the day passed. During the afternoon Nakagawa unleashed around 15 light tanks against





Left: 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, on the beach at Peleliu. Substantial Japanese resistance came from dug-in positions in the high ground — ‘The Point’, a coral ridge — that had not been neutralized by the pre-attack bombardment. The movement off the beach towards the enemy is through the smoke at the centre of the picture. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Below left: The beachhead at Peleliu shows all the clutter expected — in the foreground two LVT-4s (note the ramp at the back); on the waterline tractors pull equipment out of LCVPs; out at sea the fleet supports. *USMC via Real War Photos*

the 5th Marines from an area just north of the airfield but the regiment's 1st and 2nd Battalions beat off the Japanese armour with bazookas and support from Sherman tanks. The light tanks were destroyed and around 450 Japanese troops killed. The Japanese never again launched an assault in the open against the marines.

As night fell the marines secured their positions and, aided by starshell illumination from offshore warships, fought off parties of Japanese attempting to infiltrate their positions. Progress had been generally good, but only in the centre had they won the depth of beach-head demanded by the planners. However, the cost had been high. The division had taken 1,298 casualties — 92 killed, 1,148 wounded and 58 missing. Puller's 1st Marines had suffered the greatest losses, some 500 men. Rupertus came ashore on the 16th and established a command post in an anti-tank ditch just inland from Orange beaches. He ordered that his regiments maintain the pace of their advance to capture the island's southern zone before turning northward. In the event the 5th Marines established control of the airfield by the 19th and were moving into the island's wooded eastern peninsula, while the 7th Marines successfully moved east and south, thereby splitting the Japanese garrison.

However, the 1st Marines were again facing the toughest challenge. Its men ran into one of Nakagawa's key defensive positions, the Umurbrogol Ridges running down the spine of the island from north-east to south-west, which had to be taken to prevent the Japanese from overlooking the landing beaches and firing on troops, equipment and supplies as they were offloaded. Umurbrogol was attacked by the 1st Marines' three battalions, which were joined by the 2nd Battalion of the 7th Marines. Casualties were heavy, particularly among Puller's men, and Umurbrogol was christened Bloody Nose Ridge. By the 21st the 1st Marines had taken 1,749 casualties and Geiger, despite Rupertus's disagreement, ordered

EXCERPTS FROM PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JACKSON'S MEDAL OF HONOR CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry . . . while serving with the Third Battalion, Seventh Marines . . . on the Island of Peleliu in the Palau Group, 18 September 1944 . . . Jackson unhesitatingly proceeded forward of our lines and, courageously defying the heavy barrages, charged a large pillbox housing approximately thirty-five enemy soldiers. Pouring his automatic fire into the opening of the fixed installation to trap the occupying troops, he hurled white phosphorus grenades and explosive charges brought up by a fellow Marine, demolishing the pillbox and killing all of the enemy . . . he employed a similar means to smash two smaller positions in the immediate vicinity . . . wiping out a total of twelve pillboxes and fifty Japanese soldiers . . .

HARRY S. TRUMAN
President of the United States



that the regiment be relieved by the 81st Infantry Division's 321st Regimental Combat Team, which had been in action on Angaur since the landings there on the 17th. Despite their losses, Puller's men had made significant inroads into the Japanese defences, taking 10 ridges, destroying three large strongpoints and 22 pillboxes, and clearing 144 caves as well as inflicting some 3,500 casualties on the Japanese. The 321st took up position on the 23rd and Puller's marines took ship for Pavuvu.

With southern Peleliu secured, it became increasingly imperative to secure north Peleliu and the adjacent small island of Ngesebus as the Japanese were still able to land reinforcements from elsewhere in the Palaus to bolster Nakagawa's main garrison on the Umurbrogol Ridges. Not all the reinforcements got through – on the 23rd a flotilla was spotted by the destroyer *H.L. Edwards* and seven barges were sunk; a day later nine more barges were destroyed – but the route had to be sealed. On 23 September the 321st RCT and the 5th Marines pushed north along the island's West Road. The former then turned east to strike the Umurbrogol Ridges, while the 5th Marines advanced to secure northern Peleliu and Ngesebus, which was linked to the main island by a causeway. The 321st RCT ran into strong enemy defences overlooking the West Road and had to be supported by the 7th Marines' 3rd Battalion. Pressure on the remnants of the Japanese garrison intensified as the marines fought their way north. The first US aircraft arrived at the island's airfield, designated Marine Airbase Peleliu, on the 26th and immediately went to support ground operations a mere 1,000 metres (1,093yds) from the landing strip; their pilots were over the enemy's positions 15 seconds after taking off. A day later 40 155mm 'Long Toms,' and 130 105mm and 75mm artillery pieces began helping the bombardment from positions in the southern half of the island.

The assault on Ngesebus itself opened on 28 September, heralded by a 40-minute bombardment from the battleship *Mississippi* and two cruisers, *Denver* and *Columbus*. The 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, attacked at 09.05 hours and the island with its airfield was declared secure at 17.00 on the 29th. The marines were relieved by the 321st RCT's 2nd Battalion, which conducted further mopping-up operations. The 3rd Battalion had suffered 15 men killed and 33 wounded taking Ngesebus. The 500-strong Japanese





Above: The face of battle — two Marines take time for a smoke on Peleliu. In the background is an IVT. The man on the right cradles a .30in machine gun; note the USMC and the 'bird on a ball' emblem on his uniform pocket, and the bayonet attached to his pack. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Opposite, above and below: As the original caption says, 'Making it hot on Peleliu'. Flamethrowers were useful weapons against a dug-in enemy — whether they were of the hand-held or tank-mounted (in this case an IVT-4) variety. *TRH/US Marine Corps*

garrison was virtually wiped out. On the 30th Rupertus announced that 'organized resistance has ended on Ngesebus and all of northern Peleliu has been secured' — but this was far from true for northern Peleliu. The 1st and 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, were fighting hard for a position known as Radar Hill and the surrounding area. These were not declared secure until 3 October. By this stage of the battle marine casualties totalled 843 killed, 3,845 wounded, and 356 missing. The two battalions from the 5th Marines were temporarily withdrawn to the rest camp at Ngardololok, where they joined up with the regiment's 3rd Battalion.

For the next few weeks combat concentrated on what was known as the Umurbrogol Pocket, the centre of the remaining Japanese resistance after the capture of Ngesebus and northern Peleliu. This consisted of an area measuring no more than 350 metres by 800 metres (400 x 900 yards), but was held by some 1,500 determined and well-protected Japanese troops. The pocket's man-made defences were enhanced by the terrain. The area had just two approach routes. In the south-east a poor-quality road that was just useable by armour crossed a causeway into an area known as Horseshoe Valley, while to the north lay an area known as Baldy Ridge that was just passable to lightly equipped troops. On the eastern perimeter of the pocket, as elsewhere, the Japanese held ridge lines, cliff tops, caves and crevices that were given nicknames such as Walt Ridge and Boyd Ridge, both referring to battalion commanders of the 5th Marines who had first attacked them. To the west, resistance centred on the 200-metre (656ft) ridge known as the China Wall, the extremities of which were nicknamed Five Sisters and Five Brothers.

Opposite, above and below: Speedy casualty extraction is the key to survival of those wounded in battle, particularly in hot and humid conditions where the danger of infection is ever-present. Peleliu was a hard-won island: US forces lost nearly 2,000 killed and 8,500 wounded in the Palau campaign, so medical corpsmen — marine medical personnel were provided by the US Navy — were heavily involved.

TRH/National Archives; TRH/US Marine Corps

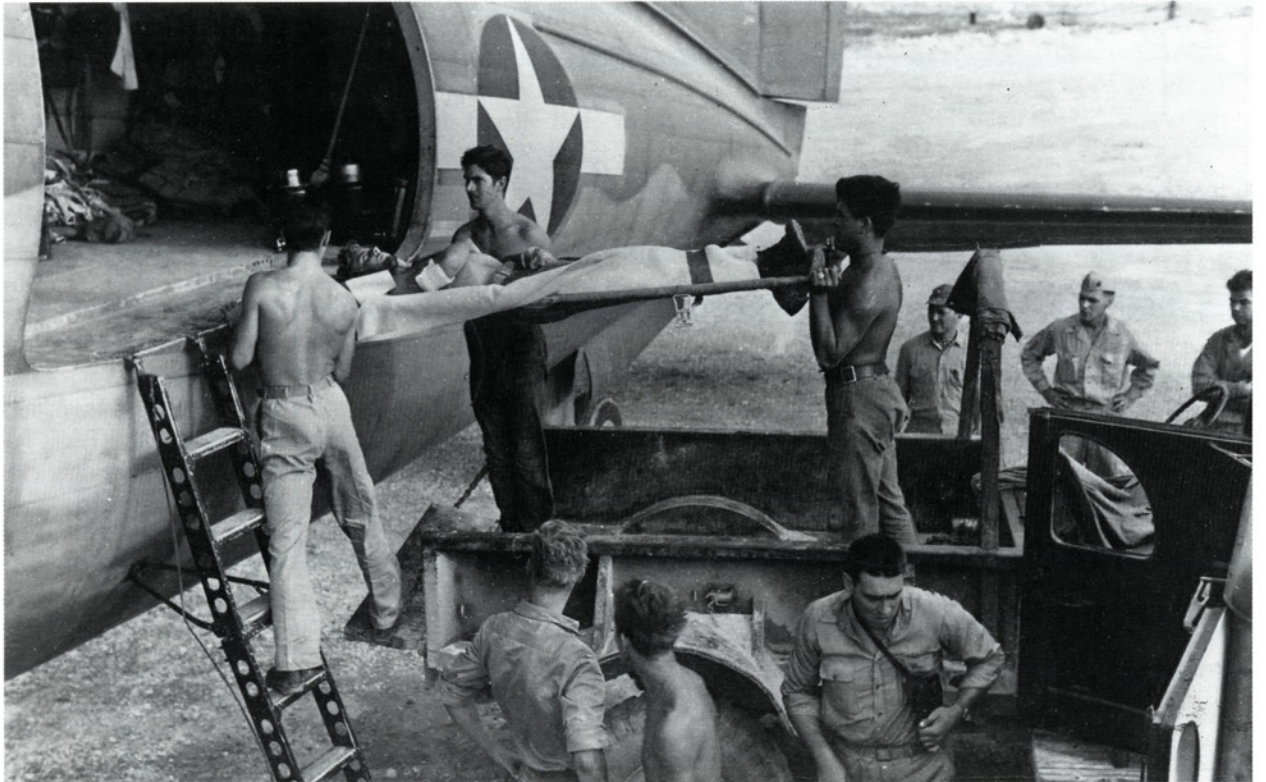
Below: Marines celebrate over a captured Japanese flag. Note the muzzle of a BAR poking into the frame at bottom left. *TRH/National Archives*

On 5 October the assault on the pocket opened with attacks by the 7th Marines. Major E. Hunter Hurst's 3rd Battalion gained a foothold on Baldy Ridge, but suffered severe casualties and was replaced by Major Gordon Gayle's 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, a day later. Also on 6 October, the 5th Marines' 1st Battalion under Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Boyd opened the renewed attack on Walt and Boyd Ridges, while the 3rd Battalion under Major Gus Gustafson cleared Horseshoe Valley and moved on the China Wall and Five Brothers. The battle lasted for three days and the marines made slow but steady progress despite their rising casualties and exhaustion. By the 8th the crests of Baldy, Boyd and Walt ridges were in US hands, effectively giving the marines control of the pocket's perimeter. The Japanese abandoned any co-ordinated attempts to oppose the marines and resorted to guerrilla tactics. Many committed suicide rather than surrender.

Satisfied that Japanese resistance was virtually at an end, the assault phase of the operation was declared over at noon on the 12th. It was also announced that the 1st Marine Division was to be relieved by the 81st Infantry Division. The division's 321st RCT took charge of the 5th Marines' positions on Baldy Ridge, China Wall and Five Brothers two days later, and the Army division took official charge of operations against the pocket on the 20th. The mopping-up operations continued for several weeks. The last act came on 25 November, when Nakagawa committed ritual suicide. Most of his men had been killed or followed their commander's example; fewer than 300 had been captured by the 27th when the fighting formally ended.

In an ironic twist of fate, the capture of Peleliu had little impact on operations against the Philippines. MacArthur's landings, originally scheduled to begin on 20 December,





Below: The plan of attack for the invasion of Okinawa — the largest of the Pacific war. Operation Iceberg would see three initial phases: seizure of the Kerama Islands and Keise Shima Island on L-6 (by 77th Infantry Division); a feint by 2nd Marine Division off Minatoga; and the main attack by Maj-Gen Roy Geiger's III Amphibious Corps (1st and 6th Marine Divisions) and Maj-Gen John Hodge's XXIV Corps (7th and 96th Infantry Divisions).

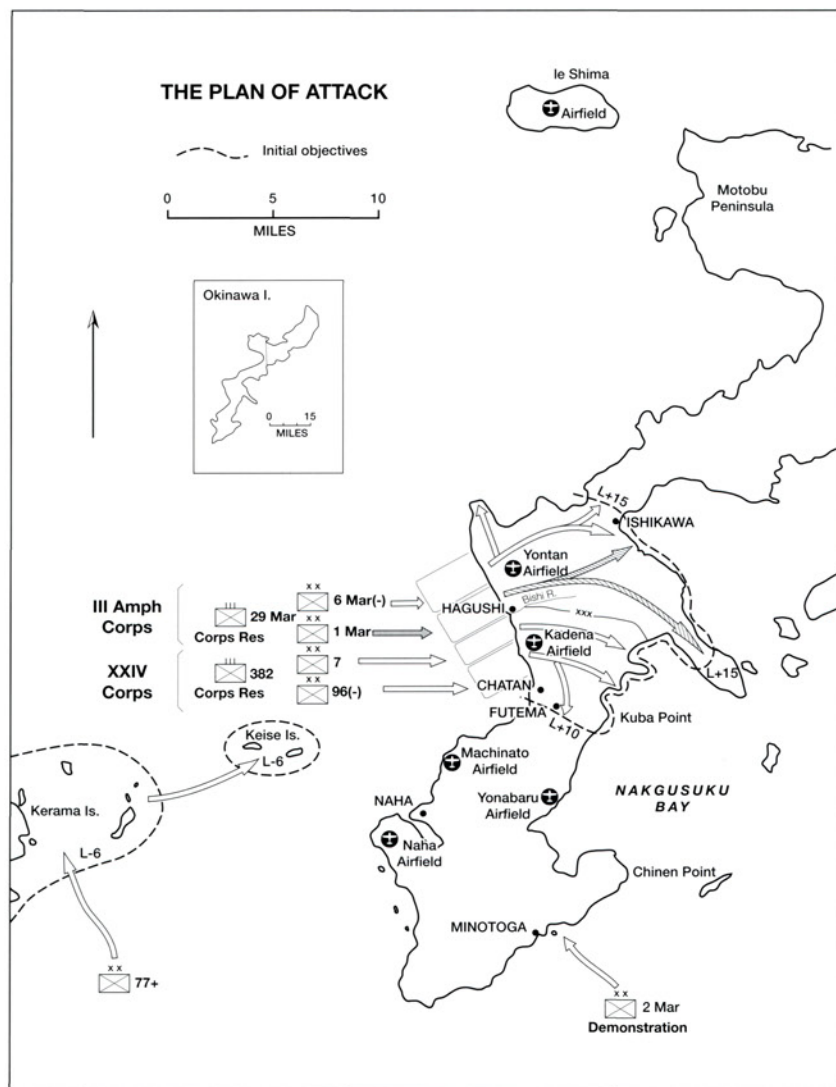
actually began on 20 October. The decision to bring the attack forward had been taken on 15 September, the day Stalemate II opened. The US forces committed to Stalemate recorded some 8,769 casualties and, of these, the marines accounted for the greater part — 1,121 dead, 5,142 wounded and 73 missing. The 1st Marine Division (Reinforced) gained a Presidential Unit Citation for its valour on Peleliu and eight men were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, five posthumously. The operation also impacted on its leadership. Harris, Hanneken and Puller, the regimental commanders, returned to the United States on leave and did not see service again in the war. Rupertus, who was to suffer a fatal heart attack in March 1945, was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and left the division to take charge of the Marine Corps School. The reasons for his departure appear to have stemmed from disagreements with Geiger concerning the replacement of marine units with those from the 81st Infantry Division.

OKINAWA — THE LAST BATTLE

The division's next assignment was the assault on Okinawa at the beginning of April

1945. Capture of the island, part of the Ryukyu group, was seen by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as an essential preliminary to a direct assault on Japan itself. Lying roughly halfway between Formosa and Kyushu, the southernmost of the Japanese home islands, the US planners saw it as an ideal staging post for any future assault on the Japanese home islands, or indeed attacks on Formosa or the Chinese mainland, all of which are roughly equidistant from Okinawa. The island's airfields could be used by US aircraft both to support the planned landings on Kyushu, which was only 560km (350 miles) distant, and the ongoing strategic bombing offensive, and it also contained the only two anchorages — Nakagusuku and Chinen Bays — in the region that were extensive enough to accommodate a large fleet.

The attack on Okinawa, code-named Iceberg, involved the creation of a huge invasion force. Nimitz took charge of the overall strategy but it was Admiral Raymond Spruance's Central Pacific Task Force that was to conduct the main operation. The key components of Spruance's command were Task Force 53 under Rear-Admiral Lawrence Reifsnider and Rear-Admiral John Hall Jr.'s Southern Attack Force. Also designated the Northern Attack Force, Reifsnider's outfit contained the III Amphibious Corps under Major-General Roy Geiger. Geiger had overall control of two marine divisions, the 1st





now under Major-General Pedro del Valle and Major-General Lemuel Shepherd Jr.'s 6th Marine Division. Hall's force contained Major-General John Hodges' XXIV Corps of two US Army infantry divisions, the 7th and 96th. Three other units were also available: the 2nd Marine Division and the 27th and 77th Infantry Divisions. These forces were designated the Tenth Army and were to be headed by Lieutenant-General Simon Bolivar Buckner once the troops were ashore. The invasion plan called for III AC and XXIV Corps to land simultaneously on the west coast of Okinawa's south-central region in the vicinity of the airfields at Kadena and Yontan. The boundary between the Northern and Southern Attack Forces was the Bishi Gawa and Geiger's two divisions were assigned to the area north of this small river.

The 1st Marine Division was given the beaches running immediately north from Bishi Gawa to the boundary with Shepherd's 6th Division, a line that ran across the island and just skirted the southern edge of Yontan airfield. After landing del Valle's main tasks were to support the 6th Division's push on Yontan by taking the high ground to the north-east of the village of China and then push directly across the island keeping pace with Hodges' XXIV Corps to the south before striking southward down the Katchin Peninsula. The overall plan was to split the island in two, clear the northern half, and then turn to deal with the Japanese in the south – a timetable had been drawn up for the accomplishment of each objective.

The 1st Division's initial landings were to be led by the 5th Marines on Yellow Beach, which was divided into three zones and included the coastal settlement of Hagushi, and the 7th Marines on Blue Beach to the north, which was split into two zones. The 1st Marines were held in reserve. Following preparatory operations against outlying islands and their garrisons in the last week of March, the main assault was scheduled for early

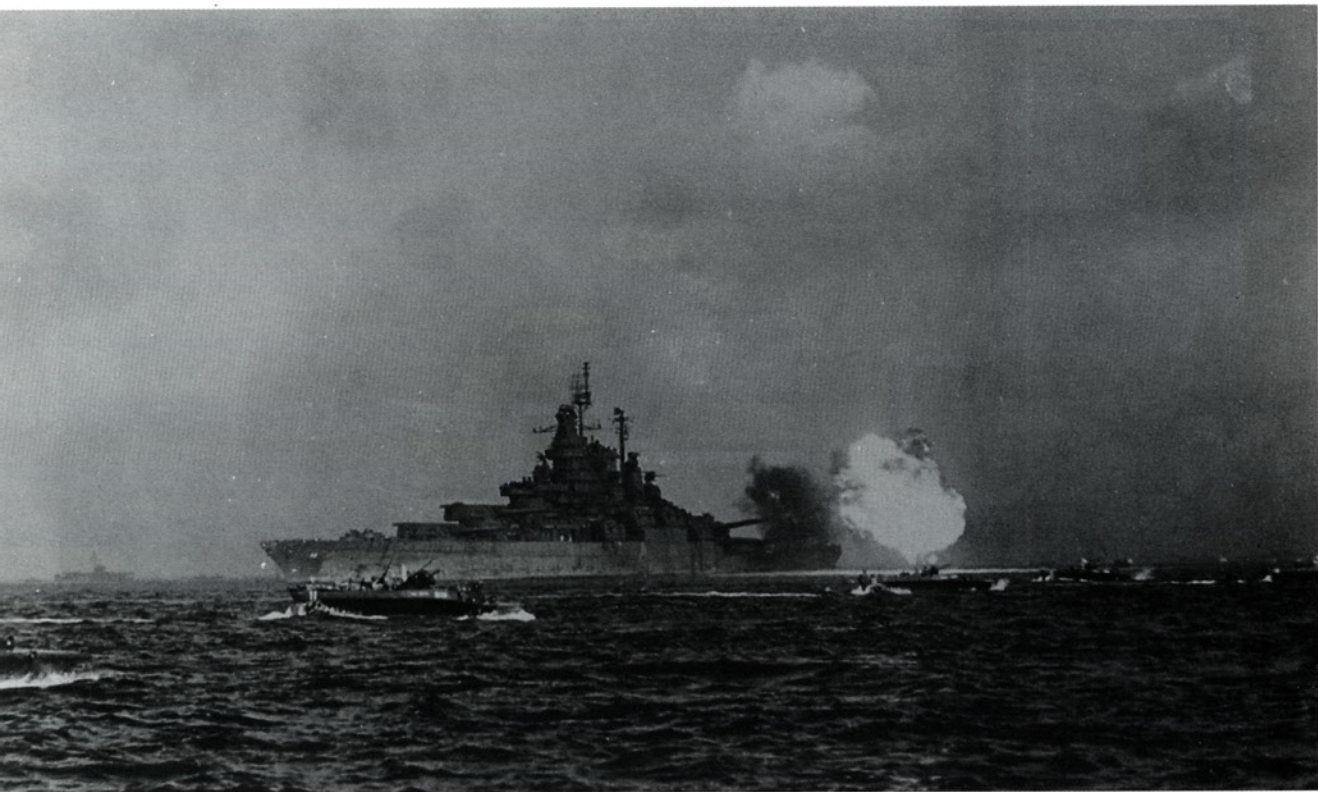
Above: A wonderfully evocative photograph that shows off the range of US landing craft: LSM-220, LST-1000, LCTs 1415, 1173, 1265 and 1049 unloading on Okinawa.

'LSM-1' class USS LSM-220 was commissioned on 20 August 1944. She had a complement of 58 officers and men and could carry a variety of packages — five medium or three heavy tanks; six LVTs or nine DUKWs. After the war she was chartered as a supply ship for the US Air Force Eastern Test Range, and ran aground and was wrecked on 10 January 1970 in the Bahamas. Here she has already disgorged her cargo.

LCT-1049, a Landing Craft Tank (Mk 6), was laid down on 4 April 1944 at Bison Shipbuilding Corp., Buffalo, NY, launched ten days later and delivered on the 19th. Her cargo capacity was 150 short tons, and she was armed with two single 20mm AA gun mounts and four .50 cal. machine guns. 1049's ramp is just about to be lowered to allow her cargo of jeeps and trucks to offload.

LCT-1265, also a Mk 6, was built between 22 July and 20 September 1944 at Quincy Barge Builders, Quincy, IL. LCT-1415, another Mk 6 was laid down at Pidgeon-Thomas Iron Co., Memphis, TN, and delivered on 2 November 1944.

TRH/National Archives





Above: April Fool's Day, 1 April 1945, and the landing on Okinawa is in progress. Here LVTs move along the shoreline. *USMC via Real War Photos*



Left: LVTs advance inland on D-Day. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Below left: Marines wading ashore during the unopposed landing on Okinawa. If they thought they were in for an easy ride, they quickly had to think again. Massive prepared defences, a committed enemy and a resourceful opponent — Lt-Gen Mitsuru Ushijima, commander of Japanese Thirty-second Army — ensured that the island's defences were as well-prepared as they could be. Before he killed himself on 22 June, Ushijima had defended Okinawa so skillfully that its capture had cost US forces some 12,281 killed, 763 aircraft destroyed and 36 ships sunk with a further 368 damaged. *USMC via Real War Photos*



Opposite, above: Amtracs head for shore under covering fire of a US battleship. US naval assets rained over 100,000 shells on Okinawa before the landings. It was not one-way traffic: on the day of the landings the USS *West Virginia* was the largest of a number of vessels hit by kamikazes. The Okinawan campaign would see a major use of these attacks — in Operation 'Ten-Go' between 6–7 April and 21–22 June there would be ten waves of attacks involving nearly 1,500 aircraft. By the end of the campaign the Japanese would suffer 1,900 air kamikaze casualties and would sink 26 Allied ships and put many more out of action, including Spruance's flagship, the cruiser *Indianapolis*. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Opposite, below: LCPVs circle awaiting the signal to move towards the beaches. *USMC via Real War Photos*

EXCERPTS FROM PRIVATE FIRST CLASS WILLIAM A. FOSTER'S MEDAL OF HONOR CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a Rifleman with Company K, Third Battalion, First Marines, First Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Okinawa Shima in the Ryukyu Chain, 2 May 1945. Dug in with another Marine on the point of the perimeter defense after waging a furious assault against a strongly fortified Japanese position, Private First Class Foster and comrade engaged in a fierce hand grenade duel with infiltrating enemy soldiers. Suddenly an enemy grenade landed beyond reach in the foxhole. Instantly diving on the deadly missile, Private First Class Foster absorbed the exploding charge in his own body, thereby protecting the other Marine from serious injury.

HARRY S. TRUMAN
President of the United States

April. All of the assault forces expected to suffer severe casualties as battle experience showed that the Japanese would put up strong resistance to any invasion. Few, however, foresaw that the fight for Okinawa would not begin on the beaches as had frequently been the case in the past.

The new Japanese strategy dated back to the beginning of the year and chiefly reflected the virtual destruction of the country's air and naval resources and an awareness that the Japanese mainland had been targeted for invasion at some point. On 20 January the Japanese high command issued a document entitled 'Outline of Army and Navy Operations', which detailed the country's future war strategy. Three points emerged: the final defensive battle of the war was to be waged in Japan itself; the main defensive operation to delay or disrupt any US ground assault against the mainland was to be in the Ryukyus; and Japan's remaining air strength was to be held back and only used against invasion fleets during amphibious landings.

Both sides recognized that Okinawa was the key to the Ryukyus, and the Japanese had been attempting to bolster its defences since the summer of 1944. The core of Okinawa's garrison by early 1945 was Lieutenant-General Mitsuri Ushijima's Thirty-second Army. Ushijima, who had been appointed in August 1944, was assisted by Lieutenant-General Isamu Cho, considered to be one of Japan's most competent officers. Their command consisted of some 110,000 troops, a total comprising the 75,000 men of the Thirty-second Army, some 9,000 naval personnel, and around 25,000 native Okinawans in the Boeitai (home guard) and Yekketsu (Blood and Iron for the Emperor Duty Units) student movement. Although Ushijima had little armour, just the 27th Tank Regiment with obsolescent equipment, he had been lavishly provided with artillery, more than any other Japanese commander in the entire Pacific war.

Ushijima's plan to defend Okinawa was based on three factors – a recognition that his forces could not stand and fight on the beaches as they and their positions would be decimated by preparatory US naval gunfire and air power; that the small size of the garrison was not sufficient to defend all of Okinawa equally; and that the island's interior offered the best terrain to construct fortifications. After studying the island's topography Ushijima opted to construct his main defensive positions along a line north of Naha, the

Below: Marines move inland, the landing still unopposed. USMC via Real War Photos



capital, Yonabaru, and Shuri, thereby effectively surrendering the northern half of the island by concentrating his resources in the south. He ordered that any US landings north of this line were not to be opposed in strength, although the comparatively few troops stationed there were to fight delaying actions and destroy the airfields at Kadena and Yontan before withdrawing to the south.

With the decision made, the Japanese set about constructing their positions. Making the best use of the rugged terrain, concealed trenches and bunkers were built, caves and ridges were turned into strongpoints, and valleys were covered by fire positions. The most extensive zone of fortification was around Shuri, the former capital of Okinawan rulers, and the whole system of interlocking defences would become known to the US forces as the Shuri Line. This was held by the garrison's most experienced unit, the 62nd Division. Ushijima recognized that he and his garrison could not hold on indefinitely – nor was he expected to as the 'Outline of Army and Navy Operations' had made it clear that Okinawa was to be a delaying action designed to dislocate the timetable for the US invasion of Japan. Consequently, he planned to inflict severe losses on the invaders over a prolonged period. A brief order issued to his men summed up his strategy: 'One plane for one warship, one boat for one ship, one man for ten of the enemy or one tank.'

Because the US forces earmarked for Iceberg were scattered across the Pacific, there was no opportunity for the 1st Division at Pavuvu to conduct large-scale exercises with other assault divisions. Equally, the island's poor facilities prevented anything more than small-scale preparations and when the build-up to Okinawa moved to a more intense phase, each of the division's regiments spent around two weeks on Guadalcanal. All of the division's artillery had to practise on Guadalcanal as the Russell Islands lacked any suitable firing ranges. Pre-assault training ended in mid-March, when the Northern Attack Force took on board III Amphibious Corps units at Pavuvu and Guadalcanal. Departing on the 17th, the task force stopped off briefly at Espiritu Santo and then made its way to the anchorage at Ulithi Atoll in the Carolines, arriving six days later. On the 24th, the assembled forces saw a sight that would become familiar off Okinawa – the carrier *Franklin*, a victim of a Japanese air attack, limped into the harbour. The following day, as the 1st Marine Division sailed for Okinawa on the assault transports of the Northern Tractor Flotilla, the preliminary naval bombardment of the invasion beaches opened.

At 04.06 hours on 1 April Admiral Richmond Turner, the commander of Task Force 51, began Iceberg by transmitting to his command the traditional order: 'Land the landing force.' At 08.00 hours, the assault waves, which stretched over 13km (8 miles), began their final approach to the shore, a distance of some 3,600 metres (almost 400yds), and a deluge of fire was unleashed across all of the landing beaches to a depth of 900 metres (984yds) inland. The first troops touched down some 30 minutes later, expecting to be



Above: Assault troops of 1st Marine Division negotiate a sea wall after leaving their LVT. *TRH/DoD*

Below: Advancing southwards past native Okinawan burial vaults. Over 30,000 of the Okinawans were impressed into service by the Japanese. *TRH/US Marine Corps*





Above: This aerial panorama shows the huge fleet on the coast and LVTs advancing inland. USMC via *Real War Photos*

greeted by a barrage of defensive fire. Yet little resistance was encountered and the surprised first wave of III Amphibious Corps began to push inland. Within one hour all of the assault units were ashore, consolidating the beaches and moving through the verdant terrain. By early afternoon both Kadena and Yontan airfields had been declared secure and the invaders continued to push deeper inland. Orders were given to dig in for night defence between 15.00 and 16.00 hours by which time the beach-head measured some 14km (15,000 yards) wide and 4.5km (5,000 yards) deep. Some 60,000 men were ashore and Tenth Army losses amounted to no more than 28 dead, 104 wounded and 27 missing. The following day the 1st Marines continued the push across the island, brushing aside light resistance from some of the local defence forces and questioning the civilians who wandered into their lines. By the 3rd the division had advanced a further 3–5km (1.8–3 miles) across the island, which put del Valle's men some eight to 13 days in advance of the planned timetable for securing Okinawa. Further progress was excellent and by the 6th they had reached the east coast, swept down the Katchin Peninsula and seized the small island of Yabuchi Shima. Lacking any large Japanese forces to engage, the division then conducted sweeps across the area so far liberated to neutralize any enemy stragglers or patrols.

The first indications of the nature of the Japanese strategy to defend Okinawa came from Hodges' XXIV Corps. After landing, its 7th and 96th Divisions turned to the south and began probing forward. On 5 April their advanced elements ran into Ushijima's defensive outposts and for three days tried to break through what was known as the Machinato Line. By the 9th they had suffered heavy casualties and dropped behind the pre-invasion timetable. An indication that III Amphibious Corps was needed to break

through the Shuri Line came on 21 April, when Buckner ordered Geiger to prepare the 1st Division's 1st Tank Battalion for action with the 27th Infantry Division. Geiger did not relish seeing his command parcelled out piecemeal for service with US Army units and argued that a larger marine formation be committed to the southern front. He prevailed – the movement order for the 1st Tank Battalion was rescinded and the 1st Marine Division as a whole was placed on 12 hours' notice to move south. Although it was initially intended as a reserve, Buckner decided on the 27th to relieve the 27th Infantry Division, which had been badly mauled in the fight for Kakuza, and replace it with del Valle's command. The redeployment, communicated to the division the following day, was to be completed by the 30th. Geiger was also told to move the 6th Marine Division to the south and that his III Amphibious Corps would take responsibility for the western sector of the Shuri Line, the zone running from Shuri itself to the island's west coast, on 7 May in preparation for a co-ordinated attack against the Japanese.

As the 1st Division moved into the front line on 1 May, the ferocity of the Japanese defence became all too apparent. The 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, for example, took over a section of the line held by the remnants of an entire infantry regiment, the 106th. Elsewhere, men of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, deployed to positions south of the town of Awacha and that afternoon witnessed several advancing US Army tanks come under heavy fire from concealed Japanese anti-tank guns hidden a mere 50 metres (55yds) from the US front line. The 1st Marine Division went into action on the 2nd, a day of heavy rain that heralded the onset of the wet season. Its objective was to push on to the northern bank of the Asa Kawa River, while Hodges' XXIV Corps assaulted positions to the east. The Japanese reacted violently and resisted stubbornly. The marines made little progress and took severe casualties. By the end of the day, after just two days at the front, 54 men had been killed, 233 wounded and 11 were missing.

The Japanese now launched their own counter-attack, which was supported by severe kamikaze strikes on the US naval forces lying offshore. The enemy ground offensive opened on the evening of the 3rd. The first indication that Ushijima had ordered an amphibious assault against the flank of the 1st Division came when marine gunners on amphibious tractors near Machinato airfield opened fire on a number of unidentified figures moving across the beach they were covering. Sixty minutes later the division reported seeing enemy invasion barges making for the shore at Kuwan, close to the southern end of the airfield. In some respects the marines were fortunate. The Japanese had intended to land the 26th Shipping Engineer Regiment farther north at Oyama but its pilots struggled to find a path through the offshore reefs and became disorientated. A reinforced marine rifle company was on hand at Kuwan. Its pre-registered machine-gun and mortar fire ripped through the enemy barges, setting many on fire, and decimated the occupants. By the morning of 4 May, the marines had destroyed the greater part of the enemy force and were conducting mopping up operations. Smaller Japanese landings farther north along the coast took place without the benefit of the cover of darkness and were comprehensively destroyed, often before the barges had reached the shore and disembarked their troops. The few Japanese that made landfall were hunted down by marine patrols aided by sentry dogs. The failure of Ushijima's counter-attack and the disruption to his forces it produced all along the line also allowed the 1st Division to secure the north bank of the Asa Kawa on the 5th. Beating off the Japanese and reaching the river in two days of fighting had cost the division some 639 casualties.

Buckner now ordered the Tenth Army to prepare for a co-ordinated attack on the outer sectors of the Shuri Line, which was to open on the 11th. Prior to the start of the offensive the 6th Marine Division began moving into position along the western coastal sector of the front and the 1st Division took station to its left. As this reorganization was taking place del Valle was also ordered, as a preliminary to the main attack, to advance

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR posthumously to CORPORAL LOUIS J. HAUGE, JR. UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Leader of a Machine-Gun Squad serving with Company C, First Battalion, First Marines, First Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Okinawa Shima in the Ryukyu Chain on 14 May 1945. Alert and aggressive during a determined assault against a strongly fortified Japanese Hill position, Corporal Hauge boldly took the initiative when his company's left flank was pinned down under a heavy machine-gun and mortar barrage with resultant severe casualties and, quickly locating the two machine guns which were delivering the uninterrupted stream of enfilade fire, ordered his squad to maintain a covering barrage as he rushed across an exposed area toward the furiously blazing enemy weapons. Although painfully wounded as he charged the first machine-gun, he launched a vigorous singlehanded grenade attack, destroyed the entire hostile gun position and moved relentlessly forward toward the other emplacement despite his wounds and the increasingly heavy Japanese fire. Undaunted by the savage opposition, he again hurled his deadly grenades with unerring aim and succeeded in demolishing the second enemy gun before he fell under the slashing fury of Japanese sniper fire. By his ready grasp of the critical situation and his heroic one-man assault tactics, Corporal Hauge had eliminated two strategically placed enemy weapons, thereby releasing the besieged troops from an overwhelming volume of hostile fire and enabling his company to advance. His indomitable fighting spirit and decisive valor in the face of almost certain death reflect the highest credit upon Corporal Hauge and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the service of his country.

HARRY S. TRUMAN
President of the United States

Right: Correspondent Ernie Pyle talks to a man on Okinawa on 1 April. He would die during the attack on the island of Ie Shima less than three weeks later.

USMC via Real War Photos

Below right: Flamethrower (they were nicknamed blowtorches) team attacking Japanese cave positions on Okinawa. *USMC via Real War Photos*

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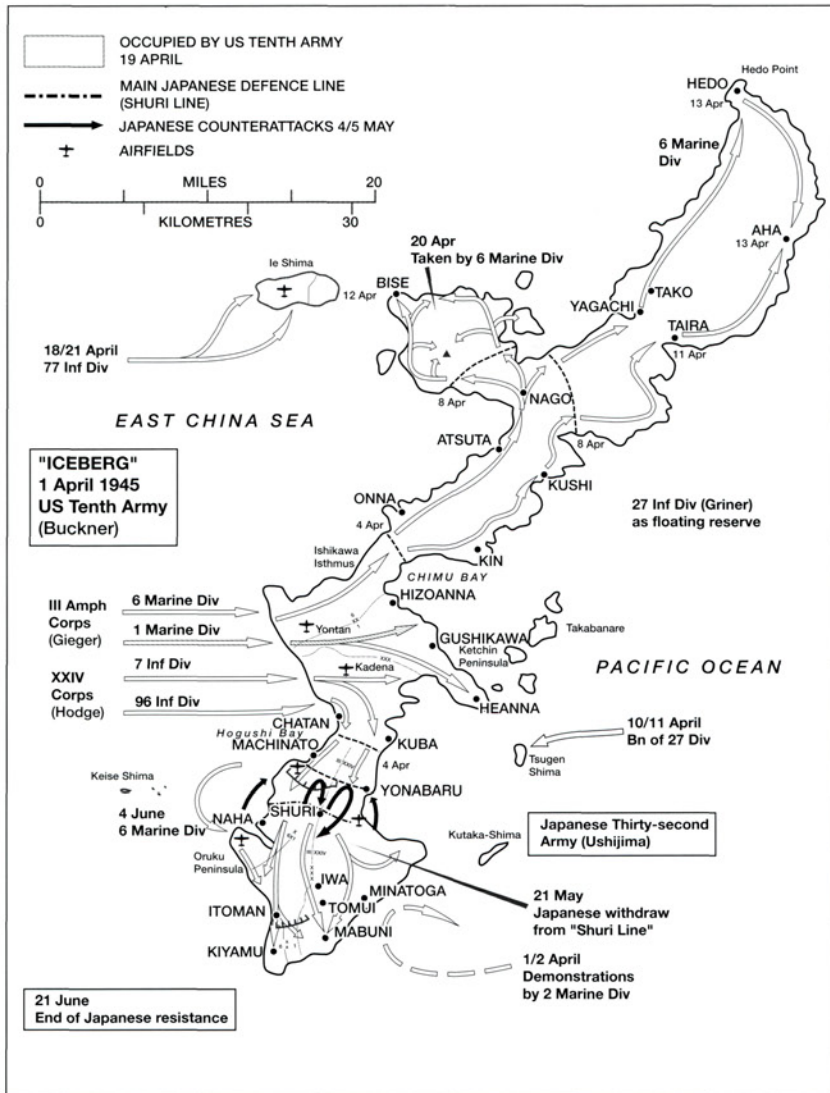
against the positions held by the Japanese 62nd Division that ran between the villages of Jichaku and Uchima following a ridge line north of Dakeshi and Awacha. The 1st Division attacked on the 6th, the first of two days of heavy rain, following a barrage by four artillery battalions as well as naval and air bombardments. The Japanese held numerous well-sited and interlocking fire positions, particularly around Awacha, and the division made little progress. At 12.00 on the following day Colonel John Griebel's 7th Marines made for the heart of the Japanese defences at Awacha and in the words of Buckner resorted to 'blowtorch and corkscrew' tactics to winkle out the Japanese. Flamethrowers and high explosive charges were used to incinerate or entomb the defenders in their fortifications and the caves in which they sheltered. Even with this firepower, progress was slow and the Awacha area remained mostly in Japanese hands.

On the 9th, the division concentrated its efforts on taking the Wana Draw around Awacha. Heavy rains and thick mud hampered its efforts. At midday the 5th Marines, reinforced by a battalion drawn from the 7th Marines, made for the draw. Although early progress was good, the attackers again ran into heavy fire from their flanks and the momentum died. During the night of 9–10 May, small-scale Japanese infiltrations of the marines' lines were repulsed as were two larger attacks. At 08.00 on the 10th, the marines renewed their onslaught against Awacha in the face of intense enemy fire. The action focussed on Dakeshi Ridge and the high ground that ran eastward to the border between the III Amphibious and XXIV Corps. Within 60 minutes, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, had been stopped in its tracks but the regiment's other two battalions were able to make some progress, particularly the 2nd Battalion, which clawed its way into the heart of the Awacha position. By the following day the greater part of Awacha was in US hands but the marines had to mop up small pockets of resistance.

While the fight for Awacha was continuing the 7th Marines were launched against Dakeshi on the 10th with support from a battalion of the 5th Marines. The attack went in with two battalions forward and two in immediate reserve. The right-hand lead battalion was stopped in its tracks by highly accurate artillery and mortar rounds as well as fire from hidden bunkers and caves. Some ground was won but had to be abandoned at the end of the day due to the ferocity of the Japanese bombardment. On the right of the division's line, the 1st Marines moved toward a road leading westward out of Dakeshi and its advance elements were able to seize a ridge overlooking the road by 14.00 hours. However, further progress here was stalled by machine-gun fire directed against the marines from Dakeshi Ridge. It became clear to delValle that the ridge had to be taken. On the 11th the 7th Marines were launched against the position and managed to gain some of the high ground, which was held throughout the night despite localized Japanese counter-attacks supported by mortar and artillery fire from Wana Ridge to the north-west of Shuri. The capture of Dakeshi Ridge was a key moment – denied this high ground the Japanese could no longer observe and fire on US forces along the western half of the island. The breaching of the outer defences of the Shuri Line was completed on the 13th when the village of Dakeshi fell to the marines.

Buckner now ordered an all-out drive against the Shuri Line proper, with the intention of opening routes into Shuri itself from the west and east. The attack began on 14 May, with the 1st Marine Division tasked with driving into the city from the west by way of Wana. The area's topography, which greatly favoured the defenders, had been strengthened by the Japanese, a fact recorded by the division after the battle: '[The enemy had] taken advantage of every feature of a terrain so difficult it could not have been better designed if the enemy himself had the power to do so.' DelValle recognized that the high ground on either side of the Wana Draw, which ran on a narrowing course from west to east between Wana village and Shuri, was the key to the Japanese defence line in the division's area of operations. The western entrance to the Wana Draw was





Above: The conquest of Okinawa took two months of bloody fighting.

Above right: Tanks and other vehicles manoeuvring on Okinawa. *USMC via Real War Photos*

Below right: The 6th Marine Division takes Sugar Loaf Hill after ten days during which they lost 2,662 casualties and suffered 1,289 cases of battle fatigue. *USMC via Real War Photos*

guarded by Hill 55 and it had to be taken before any advance on Wana could be contemplated. Equally, the high ground of Wana Ridge itself had to be captured before any move on Shuri along the line of the draw was undertaken. The marines opened their assault by plastering the high ground either side of the entrance to the draw with rounds from tanks, self-propelled guns, and wheeled artillery. Air strikes also added to the deluge unleashed on the Japanese. The preliminary fire reached a crescendo on the 16th when 34 tanks alone expended 5,000 rounds of 75mm ammunition, 173,000 machine-gun rounds, and 600 gallons of napalm on the draw. The attack into Wana opened on the following day with an advance by the 5th Marines, which was able to place a platoon on the summit of Hill 55 and beat off a series of Japanese counter-attacks during the night. As the fight for the hill continued the 5th Marines' 3rd Battalion moved against Wana Ridge but progress was slow as an analysis of the fighting confirmed: 'Gains were measured by yards won, lost, then won again.'

The struggle maintained its intensity over the following days. As quickly as the marines and their supporting tanks destroyed or revealed positions, the enemy rebuilt them or constructed and camouflaged new ones at night; matters were made worse by the gradual narrowing of the draw, which made

manoeuvring even more difficult. On the 19th, attention centred on 110 Meter Hill at the eastern end of Wana Ridge close to the north-west limits of Shuri. From this height the Japanese dominated the area in which the 1st Marine Division was operating. Heavy support fire from tanks and anti-tank guns opened a renewed push on Wana Ridge and the hill. The 7th Marines were able to secure sections of the ridge by mid afternoon, although the summit of 110 Meter Hill remained under Japanese control. The following day, tanks used high-explosive rounds and flame-throwers at close range to blast or incinerate the Japanese in their remaining bunkers and the marines followed using their own grenades and explosive charges to clear the surviving defenders. The northern slope of the ridge was gained but Japanese on its southern slopes held out despite the marines rolling barrels of napalm down on the enemy and igniting them with phosphorous grenades.

At dawn on the 21st, the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, drove forward under dark skies and heavy rain to capture the summit of 110 Meter Hill and the remaining enemy-held portions of Wana Ridge but progress was slow due to the problems the close-support tanks encountered operating in the difficult terrain. The 5th Marines, on the right of the



division, had attacked on the 20th, trying to gain control of a zone stretching from south-west of Hill 55 to the road running between Naha and Shuri. The fighting continued into the 21st and the hill was finally taken at 18.00 hours. Nevertheless, the division still faced the prospect of a hard fight to push into Shuri, particularly as the determined Japanese resistance was greatly aided by the terrain and continuing torrential rain.

However, better news emerged on the 26th when, despite the rain that made observation difficult, the 1st and 5th Marines spotted enemy units leaving Shuri and moving southward, a situation that was confirmed by aerial observation. Massed naval and air bombardments rapidly struck a body of some 4,000 Japanese as they retreated and killed an estimated 500. Geiger recognized that the Ushijima was trying to withdraw at the very least a part of his forces and ordered his units to maintain their pressure on Shuri to exploit the situation. Aggressive skirmishing by the marines led to the capture of high ground to the north of the city on the 28th, a development that paved the way for a direct attack on Shuri castle itself the following day. The 5th Marines led the way with its 1st and 3rd Battalions moving forward at 07.30 hours. The 1st Battalion under Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Shelburne gained ground on the Shuri Ridge near to the castle within two hours and del Valle gave the lieutenant-colonel permission to take the position. In the face of crumbling Japanese resistance Captain Julian Dusenbury's Company A advanced steadily and had entered the castle by 10.15.

The success of finally capturing Shuri and its castle was marred by the escape southward of many of the Japanese defenders, despite the 1st Marine and 77th Divisions' struggle to surround the city. Ushijima had recognized the danger of his men at Shuri being trapped in late May and ordered the bulk of his forces to withdraw to the Kiyamu Peninsula at the southern end of Okinawa, leaving only covering forces to delay the US advance. Kiyamu's natural terrain, particularly the Kunishi, Yaeju Dake and Yuza Dake ridges, had already been prepared for defence, and heavy rain helped to cover the

Below: Another view of a flamethrower team on Okinawa. Introduced during the battle for Guadalcanal in its M1 version that only had a range of about 60ft, by the middle of 1943 the M1A1 flamethrower had become available. It had a longer range — around 150ft — and used a thickened fuel. A year later in July 1944 the M2-2 reached front-line units. It had an effective range of 180ft. The weight of the portable unit, which consisted of fuel and pressure tanks, was about 70lb and the duration of flame of the M1 was only some 10 seconds, although this increased in the improved versions. *USMC via Real War Photos*



withdrawal. The 1st Division pushed steadily southward after the capture of Shuri and met only small pockets of resistance as it crossed the Kokuba River, but growing resupply problems made worse by the continuing heavy rain were threatening its operations by early June. Better conditions developed during the 6th and 7th, allowing elements of the division to reach the island's west coast north of Itoman, thereby helping to isolate the garrison on the Oroku Peninsula in conjunction with the 6th Marine Division, which had launched an amphibious assault on the area during the 4th.

Evidence of strengthening Japanese resistance came on the 11th. The 7th Marines pushed forward up to one kilometre, clearing the village of Tera, but then ran into enemy positions on Kunishi Ridge, the western bastion of Ushijima's last line of defence on the Kiyamu Peninsula. By early afternoon the two battalions of the 7th launched against the ridge had been fought to a standstill in part due to accurate fire from two supporting positions – Hill 69 and Yuza Dake. The regiment's commander, Colonel Edward Snedeker, order his assault troops to fall back and prepare for a surprise night attack.

Preceded by artillery fire on Kunishi and Mezado Ridge some 500 metres to the south, the 7th Marines jumped off at 03.30 hours on the 12th and caught the Japanese by surprise, gaining the crest of Kunishi within two hours. However, daylight revealed the true nature of the situation: while the 7th Marines held the crest the enemy, fighting from well-concealed positions, had control of both of its slopes and could bring down accurate fire on both the 7th Marines and units attempting to reach their positions. For four days the 7th Marines were effectively isolated and supplies had to be delivered either by parachute or inside tanks. A major effort to relieve the 7th Marines opened at 03.30 hours on the 14th, with the 1st Marines striking for the eastern crestline of the ridge. Within two hours a small foothold had been gained but once again the Japanese were able to pin down the assault force. Better news came from the 7th Marines, elements of which were able to push forward to Kunishi village a little beyond the western end of the

Below: Marines of 2nd Battalion 1st Marine carry away rations from a para drop over Okinawa. This was made necessary when rain turned the approaches to the beachheads to mud and restricted transport. The stencilling on the box reads:
 '12 - U.S. Army field rations
 Date packed December 1942
 Contract No. W-199Q.M. 39323
 Packaged by
 Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company
 Chicago, Illinois'.
TRH/US Marine Corps



THE GEORGE MEDAL

An unofficial award designed to commemorate the first difficult days that the 1st Marine Division endured on Guadalcanal, a period of acute shortages and ferocious Japanese attacks on their positions. Captain Donald Dickson, an artist in civilian life and the 5th Marines' adjutant during the battle, and Lieutenant-Colonel Merrill Twining, the division's G-3, resolved to create an appropriate medal. Twining proposed the idea, made suggestions, and Dickson set about drawing a design using a 50 cent piece and a captured Japanese postcard. The obverse side of the medal depicts a sleeved hand dropping a hot potato shaped like the outline of Guadalcanal into the hand of a hungry marine. It also shows a Saguaro cactus. Although native to Arizona rather than Guadalcanal, this motif refers to the US code-name for the island – Cactus. The design is completed by the motto: 'Facia Georgius' ('Let George Do It'). The reverse of the medal shows a cow and an electric fan and is completed by a second motto: 'In fond remembrance of the happy days spent from Aug. 7th to Jan. 5th 1943. U.S.M.C.' Both men were happy with their design and it was put into production once the division had departed Guadalcanal for Australia. A mould was constructed by a local craftsman, but only 50 or so medals were cast before it became unusable. The medal was priced at £1 and the recipients also received a commemorative certificate.

ridge on the same day. The 5th Marines replaced the 1st Marines in the line on the 15th and the Japanese defences began to crumble. One by one bunkers were neutralized and by the 16th the Kunishi positions had been decisively breached, leaving Mezado Ridge as the next line of enemy defence in front of the division.

The 1st Division's advance on Mezado Ridge, made with the 6th Marine Division, opened on 17 June. Progress was rapid – Hills 52 and 69 were overrun and a third position, Hill 79 on Makabe Ridge, was attacked, although sustained enemy fire brought the push to a halt by nightfall. The attack was renewed on the 18th, the day that the 7th Marines also declared Kunishi Ridge definitively clear of the enemy. The 8th Marines of the 2nd Division, which Buckner had recently attached to the 1st Division, spearheaded the battle. Moving off the recently captured portions of Mezado Ridge in the direction of the village of Makabe, they made rapid progress in the face of sporadic enemy fire, and were supported by a renewed assault on Hill 79 to the north-west of Makabe by the 5th Marines. However, the day's successes were soured when Buckner, who had gone forward to watch the progress of the 8th Marines, was killed in a brief bombardment. Nevertheless, it was evident that the Japanese were on the point of collapse – civilians were fleeing through US lines and numbers of Japanese regulars and Boeitai auxiliaries were surrendering. On the 19th the 8th Marines cut through the Japanese holding the village of Komesu and reached the southern coast of Okinawa, although the 5th Marines still faced a hard fight to take Hill 79 and the nearby Hill 81. The Japanese in the peninsula were now confined to two small pockets. One, around Mabuni, held Ushijima's headquarters and was in the US XXIV Corps' zone of operations, while the other centred on the ridge line around Makabe. Ushijima recognized that the battle for Okinawa was almost over. This was confirmed around Makabe on the 20th when Hill 79 was taken at 17.35 and Hill 81 fell to a combined advance by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 5th Marines.

Meeting with his staff on the evening of the 21st, the Japanese commander enjoyed a final meal and announced his intention to commit ritual suicide the next day. Ushijima was one of 141,058 Japanese casualties recorded during the 82 days of the battle for Okinawa. Of these some 10,755 were recorded as prisoners, 107,539 were officially recorded as dead and a further 23,764 were presumed to have been entombed in caves and bunkers. The final total, far in excess of Ushijima's military command, included around 30,000 civilian casualties. US casualties had also been dreadfully high – the Tenth Army reported 7,374 dead, 31,807 wounded, and 230 missing, and there were a further 26,221 non-battle casualties. The supporting naval forces had also suffered badly, in part due to kamikaze attacks. Thirty-four vessels had been sunk and 368 damaged to some degree; 4,907 naval personnel were killed or missing with 4,824 wounded.

Following the effective collapse of the Japanese, the 1st Division undertook mopping up operations against isolated pockets of resistance in the western sector of the Kiyamu Peninsula in cooperation with the 6th Division. These sweeps were effectively concluded by the end of the month and the division established a camp on the Motobu Peninsula in the north-west of the island. Although the men speculated on their next operation, they did not know they had no further part to play in the fighting as the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August forced the Japanese government to sue for peace on the 10th. As part of the terms of the surrender document signed on board the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay on 2 September, the remaining Japanese garrisons across the Pacific and in China were to be disarmed and repatriated, with the process overseen by Allied forces. The 1st Division was one of the units earmarked for the task. Arriving in China in late September, its troops operated in Hopeh Province, disarming the Japanese and attempting to maintain order during the ongoing Chinese Civil War between the communists and nationalists. The division was pulled out of the country in 1947 and moved to Camp Pendleton in southern California to face an uncertain future.

Right: Cautiously, a patrol surrounds and covers the entrance to an enemy cave complex after a charge has been exploded. Note the BAR gunner at right.

USMC via Real War Photos

Below: Okinawa wasn't just coral outcrops and caves: there were urban areas, too, as shown in this photograph of M4 Shermans and infantry moving into the outskirts of a town.

USMC via Real War Photos



INSIGNIA, CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

Right: The Marine Corps emblem and personal rank insignia.

Below: The divisional shoulder patch: General Vandegrift chose the colours after Lieutenant-Colonel Merrill Twining came up with a rough sketch on the flight out of Guadalcanal to Brisbane, Australia, in December 1942. The stars represent the Southern Cross.

Below right: The 1st Marine Regiment's badge mimics the divisional flash but with an extra numeral 1.

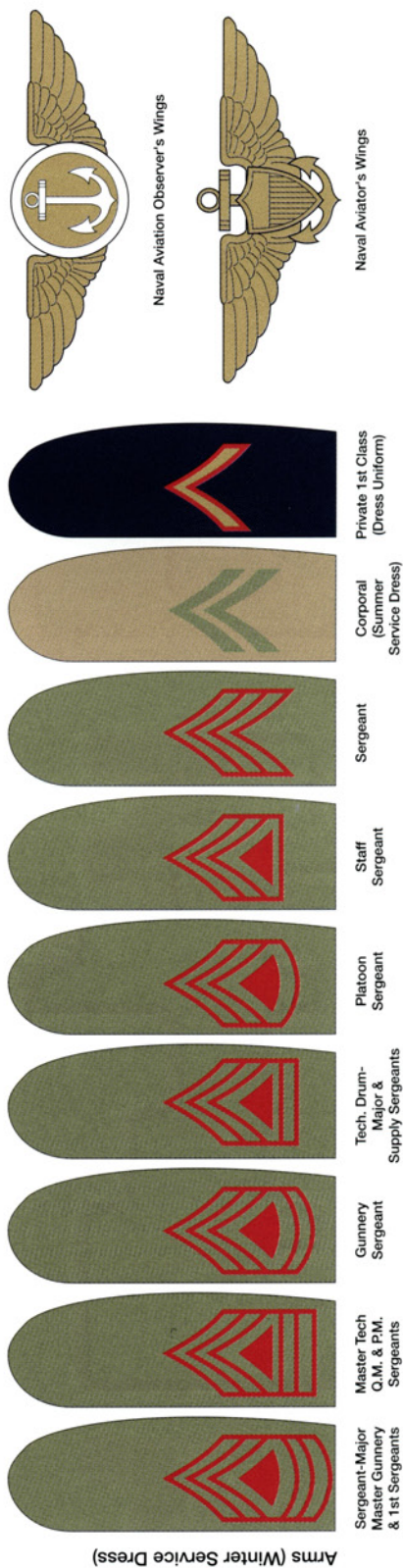
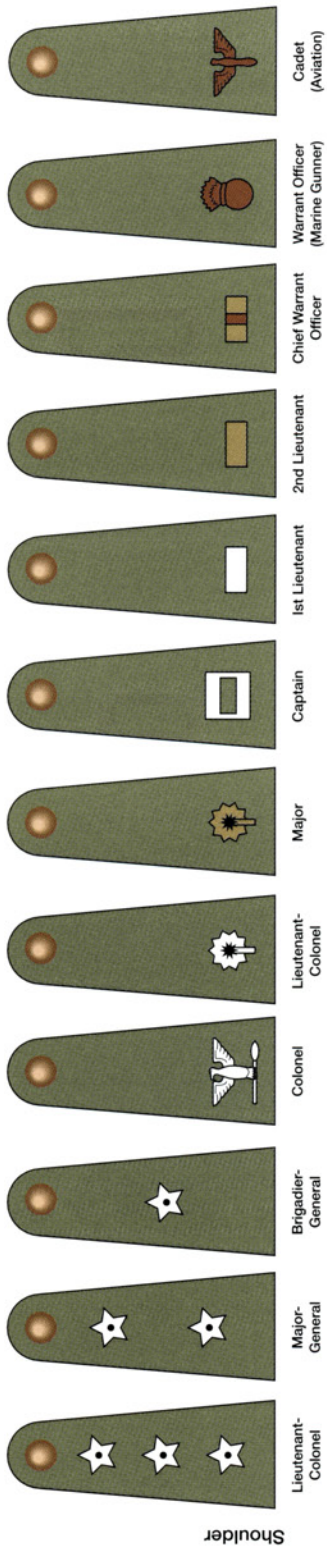
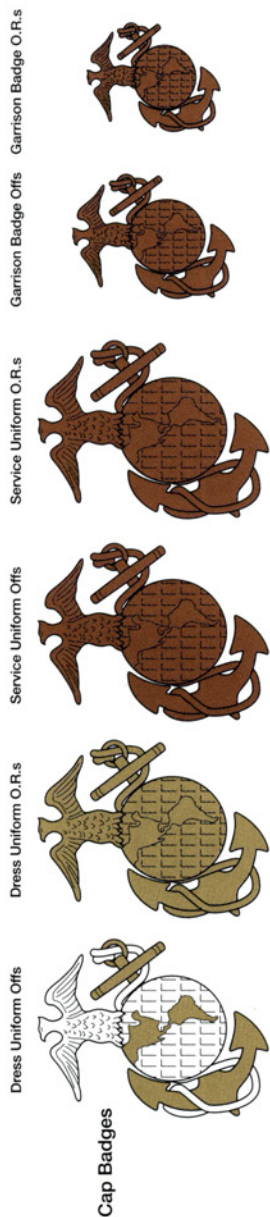
The 1st Marine Division was organized and trained for a highly specialized role – amphibious warfare – and like other marine units it was often allocated specialist units that could carry out a specific task. However, the marines themselves generally received equipment that would have been familiar to any ordinary GI. Equally, as in the case of US Army divisions, the 1st's weapons and structure changed throughout the war due to several factors, including lessons learned from previous combat, the type of defence expected from the Japanese, the need to increase firepower in the immediate front line, and the availability of manpower. In essence, a marine division contained or was given the appropriate resources to land, fight its way off the beaches, and tackle the enemy inland.

INSIGNIA

Aside from the emblems designed for individual units and the standard badges of rank, members of the division were identified by a badge usually seen on the left shoulder. Units that were permanently on the division's strength or those attached to the division



US MARINE INSIGNIA





Above: February 1944 and US Marines carry signals equipment ashore. They wear a variety of uniforms, including the camouflaged version. The camouflaged helmet cover was universally popular, the uniform less so because it was felt that it didn't hide a moving man. *TRH/USMC*

Above right: Sergeant Ray Fitzpatrick is wearing a rubberized poncho that was issued in this camouflaged version from early 1943. On one side it had spots in two shades of green and two shades of brown on a background of parched grass; on the other it had three shades of brown on a pinkish-beige background. *TRH/USMC*

Below right: 1st Marine Raiders in training in March 1943 showing off the camouflage utility two-piece uniform that was first seen that year. Made of herringbone twill (HBT) and originally dispensed to the elite Raider units and snipers, it would soon see wider service. *TRH/USMC*

for its four landings were permitted to wear the shoulder patch, which was the brainchild of Lieutenant-Colonel Merrill Twining. Twining came up with a rough sketch on the flight out of Guadalcanal to Brisbane, Australia, in December 1942 and showed it to Major-General Alexander Vandegrift, the division's commander who was also on board the aircraft. The lieutenant colonel recalled that 'in the middle of the diamond I doodled a numeral one... [and] I sketched the word "Guadalcanal" down its length... I got to thinking the whole operation had been under the Southern Cross, so I drew that in, too.' Once in Brisbane Twining purchased a child's painting set and produced a number of diamonds in different colours. Vandegrift chose blue for the background, and the final patch was blue edged in red, with a red numeral, and the lettering and five stars picked out in white. The Australian Knitting Mills produced the first batches of Twining's design and they were sold through the division's post exchange. The badge, the first such to be authorized for wear during the war, established a popular trend, which received official sanction in March 1943, and other newly formed marine divisions soon developed their own symbols. Generally never worn on utility uniforms, the badge was stitched to overcoats, jackets and shirts. Shortly after the war Twining visited Vandegrift, who was by then the Marine Corps commandant, and suggested that 'marines should not wear anything on their uniforms that distinguishes them from other marines.' The commandant concurred and the patches were removed.

Like other Marine divisions, the 1st also had a graphic symbol that was sometimes used to identify unit equipment, clothing or even an individual's personal gear. This consisted of a stencilled diamond rendered in four individual bars shown on its side, and usually seen in black or yellow. The diamond often contained several numerals – the first identifying the regiment within the division, the second the battalion, and the third the company – although there was considerable variation in the system.

COMBAT UNIFORMS

In June 1940, the loose-fitting blue denim fatigue uniform available since the 1920s, was replaced by either a one-piece coverall or a two-piece bib overall and jacket. However, on 10 November 1941, both the fatigue clothing and the summer field uniform of khaki cotton shirt and trousers, leggings, and M1917A1 steel helmet were replaced by a two-piece uniform in sage green made of herring-bone twill cotton. The coat was loose fitting and was closed by four bronzed steel buttons, each carrying the title 'U.S. Marine Corps' (these were changed to blackened steel from August 1942). There were two large pockets on the lower front of the jacket and a third on the left breast; the latter also carried the corps' eagle, globe, and anchor and the letters 'USMC' stencilled in black ink. The trousers, sometimes worn with khaki canvas leggings, had two pockets at the front and a pair at the rear. The M1917 helmet was replaced by the Army's ubiquitous M1 and ankle-high 'boondocker' footwear – cord and rubber soled leather shoes. A herringbone tweed utility cap, based on those worn by railroad workers and usually stencilled with the corps insignia on the front, was issued from early 1943, and a floppy, wide-brimmed hat was also produced. The uniform, originally intended to be no more than a work outfit, was first worn in combat on Guadalcanal and became standard for the remainder of the conflict. It also saw service during the Korean War.

The utility uniform was usually worn with M1941 webbing, which was endlessly adaptable to the combat situation. For example, with different equipment attached, it



Right: M1941 herringbone twill sage green utility uniform breast pocket. Note personal alterations — nametag and sergeant's stripes — and the USMC stencil. *Jim Moran*

Below right: M1941 utility uniform coat. *Jim Moran*

Below: The trousers to go with the M1941 coat. *Jim Moran*

Opposite, Above: Two views of the camouflaged poncho issued from 1943, showing the two distinct patterns — the same as those produced for the camouflaged utilities. *Jim Moran*

Opposite, Below: 1st Marine Division command on New Britain, 1944, showing the variety of uniform. Lt-Col Conoley at left, then 'Chesty' Puller and Capt Buckley. *via Jim Moran*







Above: Marine sniper taking aim with a Springfield Model 1903A4 sniper's rifle. Made by Remington in Ilion, NY, some 26,650 were manufactured during the war. One major difference between this and the usual version is that the bolt is bent down to allow the addition of a 2.5 x M73B1 telescope. *TRH/IWM*

Below: Mid-1944 view of two marines in a shell crater. They are carrying M1 carbines — two of the c6.225 million of this weapon that were manufactured in the United States during wartime. *TRH/USMC*

could be used as a light marching pack, marching pack, field marching pack, transport pack, and field transport pack. The marching pack, which comprised the normal combat kit, consisted of a haversack, cartridge belt, and entrenching tool. The upper haversack carried the essentials: rations, poncho, underwear, socks and mess kit. Other items added to the webbing included first aid kits, bayonet scabbard, and canteen.

Aside from the sage-green utility outfit, the marines also had access to camouflaged combat uniforms. The original camouflage design was the brainchild of Norvell Gillespie, a gardening editor with *Better Homes and Gardens*, who produced two spotted designs that could be combined to make a reversible uniform. One side comprised a pale green background with both dark and light greens and browns that was believed to be suitable for rain forests or jungle; the other of

dark through to light browns and tan on a khaki background that was for use in more open terrain and on beaches. The first camouflage uniform appeared in 1942 but was a one-piece that was found to be too hot and heavy when soaked. In 1943 a two-piece suit, similar in cut to the standard utility uniform, was issued and was seen worn complete or mixed with the standard sage-green utilities. In 1944 a modified version appeared but saw only limited adoption. The most popular item of camouflage was the helmet cover. The camouflaged trousers and jacket were found to be suitable for hidden snipers but tended to be highly visible when worn by a moving man. From March 1944 the camouflage suit was gradually abandoned and replaced by a plain olive drab version.

The 1st Marine Division was responsible for the adoption of one particular item of clothing. In Australia after Guadalcanal it received the local battledress and trousers due





to shortages of home-produced items. The top, an olive drab woollen, waist-length garment, proved to be highly popular and was nicknamed the 'Vandegrift jacket' after the division's commander. Eventually the US authorities authorized its use in a forest green version, which was permitted for officers in late 1944 and for enlisted men in August of the following year.

EQUIPMENT

Rifles

The Marines went to war with the M1903 Springfield, a bolt-action five-round magazine rifle that was a firm favourite, but this was gradually replaced by the semi-automatic eight-shot M1 Garand from Guadalcanal onward. The process of re-equipping was completed during 1943. Some marines liked the M1's added firepower, while others lamented its supposed lack of accuracy and complexity. A marine reservist, Captain Melvin Johnson, did produce an alternative, the M1941 Johnson, but this saw only limited service due to the ongoing mass production of the M1. The 15-round M1 Garand carbine was accepted for marine use from 1942, as was the folding-stock M1A1 version for parachute units. Many marines liked its high rate of fire, but some thought it lacked the stopping power of the rifle. In early 1945 some marines received the selective-fire M2 carbine with a 30-round magazine.

Shotguns and pistols

Marines made use of the Winchester M1897 and M1912 pump-action, six-shot, 12-gauge shotguns before World War II. They were officially adopted for use during 1943 and were highly effective in close-quarters combat, particularly for clearing enemy bunkers and cave complexes. The Colt M1911 and M1911A1, both with seven-round magazines, had been in use with the marines since 1912 and 1926 respectively and remained the most widely seen pistols during World War II, although many preferred the added 'punch' provided by the M1 Garand carbine.

Above: Marines await the order to push forward. The man standing is carrying a flamethrower. USMC anti-cave tactics on Okinawa were particularly effective, in spite of the care and time taken by the Japanese to protect their defensive positions. Anti-cave tactics can be summed up as the battle for the entrance — the attackers attempted to pound the entrances to the cave to force defending forces to withdraw inside, and then sent infantry forward to stop defenders coming out. Once trapped inside it was then a case of using flamethrowers, thermite or phosphorus grenades, satchel charges, other explosives or even petrol to kill or flush out those inside. If the defenders were able to protect the entrances, which were carefully concealed and heavily reinforced, then the attackers would not be able to close and the process would have to begin again. *TRH Pictures*



Right and far right: This re-enactment shows a Marine in the equipment on issue at Guadalcanal, in 1942. He's wearing P1941 two-piece utilities (see page 68/70) and the wear on the sage green colour is typical of the variety caused by washing and exposure to the elements. Note the trousers worn outside the gaiters (they dried more quickly like this than when restricted by gaiters). The M1 helmet lacks the camouflage cover that became so popular after its issue. His personal equipment is stowed in a 1941 field pack and suspenders, or attached to his belt. It includes cloth bandolier for extra rifle ammo; on his belt the M1905 bayonet for his M1903 Springfield rifle, canteen, first aid pouch and marine knife; and the M1910 entrenching shovel attached to his pack.

Jim Moran



Sub-machine guns

Marines went to war with the M1928A1 'Tommy Gun' as well as superior versions of this design, chiefly the M1 and M1A1, which entered service during 1942. These remained in use until spring 1944, when they were supposedly replaced by the M3A1 'Grease Gun'. The M3A1 had one major drawback in combat as it sounded distinctly like a Japanese light machine gun and thus had the potential to cause 'friendly fire' incidents. Marine paratrooper and raider units also received the wooden-stock M50 and folding-stock M55 Reising, first adopted in 1940 and produced until 1942. The Reising was not popular as it was prone to jamming and accidental firing.

Squad Automatic Weapons

The Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) remained standard throughout the war, either in its M1918A1 or M1918A2 versions, both of which were fitted with a bipod and had a 20-round magazine. Many had predicted the weapon's demise with the arrival of the M1 rifle but the allocation of BARs actually increased during the war, from one per squad at the outset to three during the first months of 1944. Marine paratroopers also received the 20-round M1941 Johnson light machine gun but this was not particularly popular due to design weaknesses.

Machine guns and mortars

The Browning M1919A4 light machine gun, a robust but heavy weapon, was used by weapons platoons at company level, while the heavier M1917A1 was originally deployed by weapons companies at battalion level. However, the need for more immediate firepower at the 'sharp end' brought about a reorganization during 1944 and the battalion company's three platoons were split between the rifle companies' platoons. Mortars were also deployed at company and battalion level, with the M2 60mm and the M1 81mm being allocated respectively. The numbers available gradually increased after



Guadalcanal as their plunging fire was found to be highly effective against entrenched opposition or in jungle or broken terrain.

Bunker-busting weapons

The Japanese were masters of defensive warfare, building well-hidden bunker complexes and making extensive use of natural features, such as caves, that could be adopted for a similar role. Marines often needed easily portable equipment to neutralize such positions at close range and often made use of weapons not primarily designed for such tasks. Sherman tanks, some modified to carry flame-throwers, were used against the Japanese, but difficult terrain often made their deployment problematic and marines had to rely on what they could manoeuvre or carry into position. The 37mm M3A1 anti-tank gun was made standard issue from 1942 and was capable of dealing with the enemy's lightweight and generally rarely seen armour but was more often deployed well forward firing over open sights against bunkers. However, the M3A1 was far from lightweight and marines often struggled to bring it into action on rough ground.

Bazookas, again originally designed as a portable anti-tank weapon, performed a similar function in marine hands. The M1 was issued from 1942 initially in limited numbers, but the allocation had doubled by the middle of the following year. In 1944 the M1 was gradually succeeded by the M1A1, which in turn was superseded by the M18 launcher, a larger weapon whose tube was designed to be broken down into two sections for transportation. Man-portable flame-throwers, although closely associated with the marines, were not widely available in the early stages of the Pacific campaign but their bunker-busting capabilities rapidly made them an essential item. First to be deployed was the M1, on Guadalcanal at the beginning of 1943. However, its dangerously limited range – just 15 metres (50ft) – led to the development of longer-range versions: the M1A1 effective up to three times the range and the M2-2, which could shoot out a flame to some 60 metres (66yds).

Left: The Marine in the background is carrying a Winchester pump-action 12-gauge shotgun, probably the M1897. In the foreground the weapon is an M1 Carbine with a grenade attachment to the barrel. The grenade that would be fired from this is attached to the man's pack. *TRH/US Navy*

Below left: A 60mm M2 mortar section in action. Note the LVT in the background. *TRH/USMC*

Below centre: Bazookas made good bunker-busters; this is an M18 that could be broken down into two parts for ease of transport. *TRH/USMC*

Below: Flamethrower in action. It's probably an M1 because this is an early 1943 photograph. *TRH/US Army*

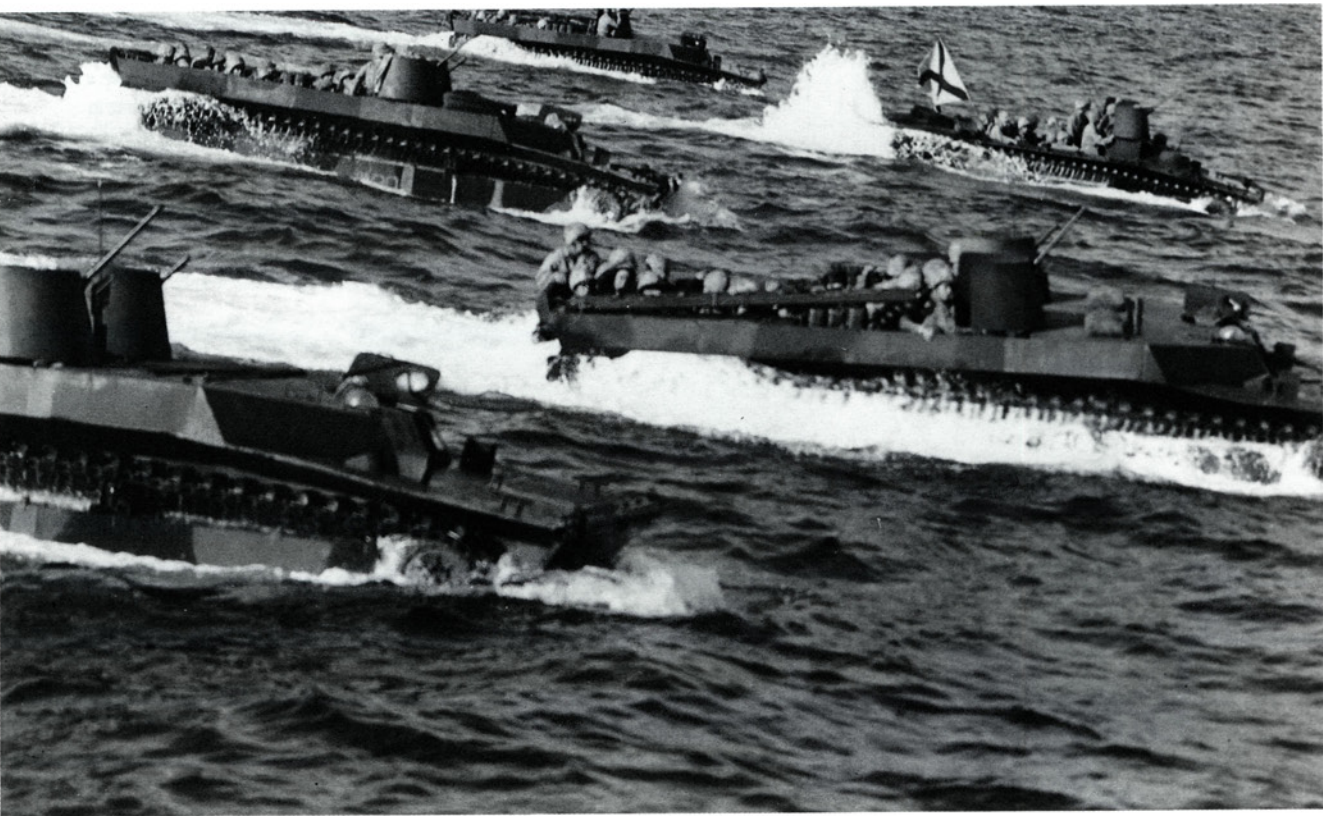






Left and far left: Marine officer's equipment at the time of the Okinawa campaign, 1945. He is wearing P1941 utilities, Army M1943 field boots, helmet with camouflaged cover and a pistol belt with webbing suspenders. Attached to the belt are magazine pouches for his M1 carbine that sports an M4 knife bayonet and M1911A1 pistol. He has two canteens, a K-Bar knife, a first aid pouch and a map case. Note the difference in the canteen case with that on the Guadalcanal Marine (pages 74–75). The crossed-flap variety was introduced in mid-1944. Note the complete lack of insignia – the Japanese snipers had proved themselves extremely capable and officers and NCOs did not increase their chances of survival by advertising their rank.

Jim Moran



PEOPLE

RANDOLPH McCALL PATE (1898–1961)

Pate was one of a number of experienced officers attached to the 1st Marine Division during World War II who fought in several subsequent conflicts and achieved the highest rank. After a short spell in the US Army, he attended the Virginia Military Institute, graduated in 1921, and then received a commission in the Marine Corps Reserve. Pate saw active service overseas in the Dominican Republic (1923–24) and China (1927–29), and was gradually promoted, reaching the rank of major in October 1938. He joined the 1st Marine Division as its assistant chief of supply in 1939 and was made a lieutenant-colonel in January 1942.

After serving with the division on Guadalcanal from August to December, he was appointed colonel and served as the V Amphibious Corps' deputy chief of staff. In this capacity he was closely involved in the planning and conduct of the battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1945. After World War II, he held a number of administrative positions between 1947 and 1951, including director of the Division of Reserve, Marine Corps Headquarters, a member of the General Board, Navy Department, and director of the Marine Corps Educational Center. In November 1951 he was made head of the Marine Corps Reserve and, following promotion to major-general, returned to active service as commander of the 2nd Marine Division. During the latter stages of the Korean War, Pate took charge of his old 1st Marine Division, a position he held until May 1954. He returned to the United States and was appointed assistant commandant of the Marine Corps with the rank of lieutenant-general in July. On 1 January 1956 Pate succeeded General Lemuel Sheperd as commandant and kept the post until his retirement in December 1959. He died after a brief illness some 18 months later and was interred in Arlington National Cemetery.

LEWIS B. PULLER (1898–1971)

Puller, one of the division's most renowned and decorated officers, studied at the Virginia Military Institute before joining the Marine Corps in August 1918 and was appointed a second lieutenant in June 1919, but was quickly placed on inactive duty due to post-World War I military cutbacks. Nevertheless, he rejoined as an enlisted man and served in Haiti against local rebels until March 1924. He was promoted to second lieutenant and spent the next two years in a variety of posts. Between July 1926 and June 1928 he was stationed at Pearl Harbor, spent a short spell at San Diego, and in December joined the Nicaraguan National Guard Detachment. In two tours of duty in Nicaragua he won his first and second Navy Crosses, but returned to the United States in January 1933. Further overseas duty ensued with Puller serving in China and with the US Asiatic Fleet until

Opposite page, above: This gives a good idea of the size of the LVTs as a marine walks past. *TRH Pictures*

Opposite page, below: This well-known photograph of LVT-4s en route to Iwo Jima gives a good impression of what these craft looked like in the sea at close quarters. *TRH/National Archives*

Below: 'Chesty' Puller was born on 26 June 1898, enlisting in the Marine Corps in 1918. He would spend the next 37 years in the Marine Corps, most of them overseas as he chased bandits in Haiti and Nicaragua, commanded the Horse Marines in Peking, fought through four major campaigns in the Pacific, and took part in the Inchon landings as well as some bitter actions in the Korean War. Indeed, he tried to serve in Vietnam in 1966 at 68 but was turned down because of his age! He died on 11 October 1971, the only marine to win the Navy Cross five times. The most decorated officer of the Marine Corps, excluding numerous foreign distinctions and medals he won 14 personal decorations including the Distinguished Service Cross. *USMC*



COMMANDERS

	From	To
World War II		
Major-General Holland M. Smith	1 February 1941	13 June 1941
Major-General Philip H. Torrey	14 June 1941	22 March 1942
Major-General Alexander A. Vandegrift	23 March 1942	7 July 1943
Major-General William Rupertus	8 July 1943	1 November 1944
Major-General Pedro del Valle	2 November 1944	8 August 1945
Postwar (occupation of Japan until end 1946)		
Major-General Dewitt Peck	9 August 1945	9 June 1946
Major-General Keller E. Rockey	10 June 1946	17 September 1946
Major-General Samuel L. Howard	18 September 1946	17 June 1947



Above: In 1916, as a second lieutenant, Pedro del Valle took part in the capture of Santo Domingo and in the campaign in the Dominican Republic. During World War II he commanded the 1st Marine Division's artillery regiment — the 11th. He took part in the invasion of Guadalcanal and won the Gold Star for his participation at Guam in July and August 1944. He became Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, in 1944 and was awarded a Distinguished Service Medal for his leadership. He retired in 1948. *USMC*

mid-1936. Over the following years he had spells as an instructor, served on board the *USS Augusta*, and returned to China in May 1940.

Puller returned to the United States in August 1941 and a month later was serving with the 1st Marine Division as commander of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. In March 1942 the 7th Marines were temporarily detached from the division to serve with the 3rd Marine Brigade on British Samoa. Puller was reunited with the 1st Division during the following September and took part in the battle for Guadalcanal, where he won his third Navy Cross on the night of 24–25 October. After the epic struggle Puller was made the 7th Marines' executive officer and it was in this capacity in January 1944 that he won his fourth Navy Cross during the Cape Gloucester campaign on New Britain. A month later he moved to take charge of the 1st Marines and led the regiment during the struggle for Peleliu in September and October. After Peleliu Puller returned to the United States and was made the executive officer of the Infantry Training Regiment at Camp Lejeune at the beginning of 1945. He took over the running of the regiment in February but in August 1946 he became director of the 8th Marine Corps Reserve District based at New Orleans, Louisiana. He later commanded the Marine Barracks, Pearl Harbor, until August 1950 when the outbreak of the Korean War saw him transferred back to the 1st Marines for active service.

Puller led the unit ashore at Inchon in September and remained in charge until January 1951, when he was made the 1st Division's assistant commander with the rank of brigadier-general. The following May he was back at Camp Pendleton and in January 1952 made commander of the 3rd Marine Division, a position he held until ordered to take charge of Troop Training Unit, Pacific, in June. In September 1953 he was made a major-general and went on to lead the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune. Despite growing ill health he kept the post until February 1955, when he was appointed the camp's deputy commander. In 1966, he requested a return to active service in Vietnam but was turned down due to his age and sickness.

WILLIAM HENRY RUPERTUS (1889–1945)

After a three-year period as a cadet at the US Revenue Cutter Service School, Rupertus was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps on 10 November 1913 and progressed to the Marine Corps Officers School, where he graduated first in his class in 1915. During World War I, he commanded a marine detachment on the *USS Florida*, part

of a naval squadron serving with the British. After World War I, Rupertus gained promotion to captain and served against local rebels in Haiti, winning two awards for his service. Returning to the United States, he attended the Field Officers School during 1924–5 and the following year attended the Army Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, graduating with distinction. Rupertus then taught at the Marine Corps Schools but in 1929 was sent overseas as a major to join the Marine Corps guard at the US legation in Beijing. Following the China tour he returned to the United States and by 1936 was chief of staff, Fleet Marine Force. In 1940 he returned to China to serve as the executive officer of the 4th Marines at Shanghai.

In the period immediately before World War II, Rupertus had charge of marine bases and barracks in Washington D.C., Cuba and San Diego, but was then made the assistant commander of the 1st Marine Division. In this position he took part in the Guadalcanal campaign, overseeing the successful landings on the neighbouring islands of Tulagi, Gavutu and Tanambogo in August 1942 for which he was awarded the Navy Cross. In July 1943 he was promoted to command the division due to the departure of Lieutenant-General Alexander Vandegrift and led the landings on New Britain the following December. For his actions on the island, Rupertus received the US Army's Distinguished Service Medal. His last mission with the 1st Division was the invasion of Peleliu in September 1944 after which he returned to the United States. In November he was made commandant of the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico, Virginia, but survived in the post for just a few months. Rupertus died of a heart attack on 25 March 1945 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

HOLLAND McTYEIRE SMITH (1882–1967)

'Howlin' Mad' Smith remains a legendary figure in the Marine Corps. Born in Alabama, he trained and practised as a lawyer before being commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps in March 1905. Several periods of overseas service followed – the Philippines (1906–08 and 1912–14), Panama (1909–10), and the Dominican Republic (1916–17). During World War I, he served with the 5th Marines, rising to become adjutant of the 4th Marine Brigade. He was then assigned to the staff of the US I Corps and saw action during the Aisne-Marne, St Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne offensives in the second half of 1918. During the interwar period he gradually rose in seniority and held a number of staff positions. Between 1925 and 1926, he was commander of the 1st Marine Brigade and in April 1939 was made assistant to the Marine Corps commandant, General Thomas Holcomb. In September Smith took charge of the 1st Marine Brigade once again and in February 1941 was promoted major-general and assigned to Amphibious Force, Atlantic Fleet, to work under Admiral Richmond Turner.

In September 1941 Smith moved to the West Coast to oversee the organization of the Pacific Fleet Amphibious Force and went on to plan and control the invasion of Tarawa in November 1943 as commander of V Amphibious Corps. Having firmly established himself as an expert on amphibious warfare, he subsequently led some of the most critical landings of the Pacific campaign in 1944 – Kwajalein (January–February), Eniwetok (February), Saipan (June–July), Guam (July–August), and Tinian (July–August). Smith was put in charge of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, in July and oversaw the 1945 landings on Iwo Jima and Okinawa. In July 1945 he was made commander of the Camp Pendleton training centre. He retired from active service as a full general in August 1946 and later published his wartime memoirs in a book entitled *Coral and Brass* (1949).

Below: General Holland McTyre 'Howling Mad' Smith was commissioned into the Marines in 1905 and served in Europe during World War I. Instrumental in developing amphibious tactics during World War II, he commanded troops in action in the Gilbert, Marshall and Mariana Islands and went on to become the first commander of the Fleet Marine Force in the Pacific 1944–45. He retired in 1946 and had the honour of having a Marine camp named after him. *USMC*



MEDAL OF HONOR
1942
CO 1ST MARINE DIVISION
SOLOMON ISLANDS

**For service as set forth in the
 following CITATION:**

For outstanding and heroic accomplishment above and beyond the call of duty as commanding officer of the 1st Marine Division in operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands during the period 7 August to 9 December 1942. With the adverse factors of weather, terrain, and disease making his task a difficult and hazardous undertaking, and with his command eventually including sea, land, and air forces of Army, Navy and Marine Corps, Major General Vandegrift achieved marked success in commanding the initial landings of the United States forces in the Solomon Islands and in their subsequent occupation. His tenacity, courage, and resourcefulness prevailed against a strong, determined, and experienced enemy, and the gallant fighting spirit of the men under his inspiring leadership enabled them to withstand aerial, land, and sea bombardment, to surmount all obstacles, and leave a disorganized and ravaged enemy. This dangerous but vital mission, accomplished at the constant risk of his life, resulted in securing a valuable base for further operations of our forces against the enemy, and its successful completion reflects great credit upon Major General Vandegrift, his command, and the United States Naval Service.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
 President of the United States

ALEXANDER ARCHER VANDEGRIFT (1887–1973)

Virginia-born Vandegrift joined the Marine Corps in 1908 and spent much of the next 15 years in the Caribbean. Between August and November 1912 he saw action in Nicaragua; in April 1914 he was present during the US occupation of Vera Cruz; and he had three tours of duty in Haiti during 1915, 1916–18 and 1919–23. Following a return to the United States during which he completed further officer training, Vandegrift was attached to the expeditionary force in China under General Smedley Butler during 1927 and 1928. Desk jobs in the United States followed between 1928 and 1935 during which time he helped draw up the Tentative Manual of Landing Operations, a blueprint for future amphibious operations. In 1935 he returned to China as commander of the Marine detachment at Beijing but two years later was promoted secretary (later assistant) to the Marine Corps' commandant, General Thomas Holcomb.

In 1940 Vandegrift was made brigadier-general and in November of the following year assigned to the 1st Marine Division at New River, North Carolina, and in March 1942 was appointed its commanding officer. In this capacity he saw its transfer to the Pacific and oversaw the landings on Guadalcanal in August and the subsequent months of bitter fighting until his exhausted troops were withdrawn in December. Although expecting to return to the United States, Vandegrift remained in the theatre following the sudden death of the commander of I Marine Corps, which he took charge of during the landings at Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville, on 11 November 1943. Subsequently, Vandegrift did return home and replaced Holcomb as commandant in January 1944. Promoted to full general in 1945, he was the first active-duty marine to hold the rank. As commandant, Vandegrift oversaw the wartime expansion of the Marine Corps to a strength of some 500,000 men and, after Japan's surrender, he managed the demobilization of the greater part of the force. He retired from active duty on December 31, 1947.



ANTHONY CASAMENTO

Casamento's receipt of the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery on 1 November 1942 during action near Point Cruz on Guadalcanal was much delayed. At the time the corporal from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, was recommended for the Navy Cross but he eventually received the higher award on 22 August 1980, some 38 years after the battle and seven years before his death, from President Jimmy Carter in person at the White House. His citation reads:

'For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with Company D, First Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division on Guadalcanal on 1 November 1942. Serving as a leader of a machine gun section, Corporal Casamento directed his unit to advance along a ridge near the Matanikau river where they engaged the enemy. He positioned his section to provide direct support for the main force of his company which was behind him.

'During the course of this engagement, all members of his section were either killed or severely wounded and he himself suffered multiple, grievous wounds. Nonetheless, Corporal Casamento continued to provide critical supporting fire for the attack and in defence of his position. Following the loss of all effective personnel, he set up, loaded, and manned his unit's machine gun, tenaciously holding the enemy forces at bay. Corporal Casamento single-handedly engaged and destroyed one machine gun emplacement to his front and took under fire the other emplacement on the flank. Despite the heat and ferocity of the engagement, he continued to man his own weapon and repeatedly repulsed multiple assaults by the enemy forces, thereby protecting the flanks of the adjoining companies and holding his position until the arrival of the main attacking force. Corporal Casamento's courageous fighting spirit, heroic conduct, and unwavering dedication to duty reflected great credit upon himself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.'

Below left: Lt-Gen Thomas Holcomb, Commandant of the Marine Corps, Maj-Gen Vandegrift and Col Merritt A. Edson on inspection at Guadalcanal, November 1942. Vandegrift sailed to the South Pacific in May 1942 as commanding general of the first Marine division ever to leave the shores of the United States. On 7 August 1942, in the Solomon Islands, he led ashore the First Marine Division, in the first large-scale offensive action against the Japanese. In July 1943, he assumed command of the I Marine Amphibious Corps, that went on to take part in the landing at Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville, Northern Solomon Islands, on 1 November 1943. After establishing the beachhead, he returned to Washington, D. C., where, on 1 January 1944, he became the eighteenth Commandant of the Marine Corps. On 4 April 1945, he became the first Marine officer on active duty to attain four-star rank. For his work as Commandant of the Marine Corps Vandegrift was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. *USMC*

CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR AWARDS*

Name	Unit	Place	Date
Maj-Gen Alexander Vandegrift	1st Marine Division	Solomons	7 August–9 December 1942
Sergeant John Basilone	1st Battalion, 7th Marines	Guadalcanal	24–25 October 1942
Platoon Sgt Mitchell Paige	2nd Battalion, 7th Marines	Guadalcanal	26 October 1942
Corporal Anthony Casamento	1st Battalion, 5th Marines	Guadalcanal	1 November 1942
Corporal Lewis Bausell**	1st Battalion, 5th Marines	Peleliu	15 September 1944
1st Lt Carlton Rouh	1st Battalion, 5th Marines	Peleliu	15 September 1944
PFC Arthur Jackson	3rd Battalion, 7th Marines	Peleliu	18 September 1944
PFC Charles Roan**	2nd Battalion, 7th Marines	Peleliu	18 September 1944
Captain Everett Pope	1st Battalion, 1st Marines	Peleliu	19–20 September 1944
PFC John New**	2nd Battalion, 7th Marines	Peleliu	25 September 1944
Private Wesley Phelps**	3rd Battalion, 7th Marines	Peleliu	4 October 1944
Hospital Apprentice 1st Class Robert Bush	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines	Okinawa	2 May 1945
PFC William Foster**	3rd Battalion, 1st Marines	Okinawa	2 May 1945
Sergeant Elbert Kinser**	3rd Battalion, 1st Marines	Okinawa	4 May 1945
Corporal John Fardy**	1st Battalion, 1st Marines	Okinawa	7 May 1945
Private Dale Hansen**	1st Battalion, 1st Marines	Okinawa	7 May 1945
PFC Albert Schwab**	1st Battalion, 5th Marines	Okinawa	7 May 1945
Pharmacist's Mate 1st Class William Halyburton**	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines	Okinawa	10 May 1945
Corporal Louis Hauge Jr.**	1st Battalion, 1st Marines	Okinawa	14 May 1945

*Excludes members of units temporarily attached to the 1st Marine Division

**Denotes killed in action

POSTWAR

After World War II, the conventional US armed forces were run down as military spending increasingly centred on building an effective nuclear deterrent, a key element of the Cold War. The 1st Marine Division had returned to Camp Pendleton from China in 1947 to face an uncertain future, yet salvation lay at hand – an operation to demonstrate the importance of maintaining an amphibious capability. On 25 June 1950, North Korean forces invaded South Korea, precipitating an international crisis that led the UN Security Council to request that member nations assist the Republic of Korea. Four days later, as North Korean units were pushing ever deeper into the south, President Harry S. Truman ordered General Douglas MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief, Far East, to commit US forces to South Korea. US units were rushed piecemeal into the action but could not halt the invaders and by early September they and the South Koreans were left holding a perimeter around Pusan in the south-east of the republic.

THE KOREAN WAR

MacArthur's solution to the crisis was to launch an amphibious assault against Inchon far to the north on the west coast on 15 September and then drive for Seoul, the South Korean capital, some 24km (15 miles) miles to the east. He believed that such a bold strategy would threaten the supply lines of the North Koreans around Pusan and provoke an immediate withdrawal. The operation, code named Chromite, was spearheaded by the 1st Marine Division under Major-General Oliver P. Smith. While the 7th Marines remained a floating reserve, the 5th Marines came ashore at two points, Red Beach at the north-

west of the port and Green Beach on the island of Wolmi-do, which was linked to Inchon by a causeway. The 1st Marines were to come ashore at Blue Beach on the south fringe of the port. Wolmi-do, from where Radio Hill dominated the other landing sites, was the first target. The 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, stormed ashore at 06.33 hours, raised the Stars and Stripes over the hill in 30 minutes, and secured all of Wolmi-Do in the next hour. Following a pause due to low tide, which exposed miles of uncrossable mud flats, the remaining assault forces landed. The 1st and 2nd Battalions, 5th Marines, coming ashore in the north-west at 17.30, quickly crossed a high seawall and pushed into Inchon, capturing the British Consulate and Observatory Hill. The 1st Marines at Blue Beach landed at 16.00 and met minimal opposition. Chromite had been brilliantly successful and casualties among the invasion force numbered fewer than 200, with just 20 dead.

Below: 1st Marine Division in Korea: Private First Class John H. Gibbs is instructed in the use of a 3.5in bazooka. *TRH Pictures/USMC*



The 1st Division now spearheaded the drive on Seoul, with the 5th and 7th Marines pushing to the north-west and the 1st Marines to the west of the city. Although some objectives were taken easily, such as Kimpo airfield late on the 17th, others proved tougher targets. The 1st Marines faced a bitter fight for Yongdungpo, one of Seoul's suburbs on the south bank of the Han River, which fell after three days. By the 25th the division was fully involved in bitter street fighting in the capital that was to last for three days and leave much of Seoul in ruins, but the North Koreans facing MacArthur and those in the south of the country were forced into headlong retreat back across the 38th Parallel.

MacArthur now drove deep into North Korea and the 1st Marine Division was committed to a second landing, this time at Wonsan on the east coast of North Korea on 25 October. The assault was unopposed — in fact the port had fallen several days earlier and Bob Hope had entertained the troops there the night before! The 1st Division advanced northward from Wonsan, moving through Hungnam toward the Chosin Reservoir, the location of a key hydro-electric plant but a position also dangerously close to the Yalu River, North Korea's border with the People's Republic of China. By 25 November, as the first winter snows appeared, the 5th and 7th Marines had arrived at Yudam-ni at the western end of the reservoir, while the bulk of the division was strung out on the road that ran southward among mountainous terrain to Hagaru and Koto-ri. Two days later the Chinese counter-attacked in overwhelming force. Fighting for its existence, the division had to conduct an epic retreat of some 128km (80 miles) to Hungnam in the depths of winter along a single road with the Chinese holding the high ground on either side and establishing road-blocks. On 4 December, Smith displayed admirable nerve when he informed journalists: 'Gentlemen, we are not retreating. We are advancing in another direction.' Lieutenant-Colonel Lewis Puller, commander of the 1st Marines, put it more bluntly: 'I don't give a damn how many Chinese laundrymen there are between us and Hungnam. There aren't enough in the world to stop a marine regiment going where it wants to go.' Puller was right. The division, minus much of its heavy equipment, reached Hungnam on 10 December and the evacuation was completed 14 days later, but its losses during the withdrawal from Chosin totalled 4,418 battle and 7,313 non-battle casualties, many of the latter suffering frostbite.

By late January 1951 the wide-ranging Chinese-led counter-offensive had pushed the UN forces out of North Korea, overrun much of northern South Korea, including Seoul, and established a new front some 64km (40 miles) to its south. The 1st Division helped blunt a renewed Chinese offensive in the east-central sector of the front in late spring and then took part in the UN counter-stroke. Committed to the drive north past the eastern edge of Hwachom Reservoir, it secured its objective, a ridge in the mountains overlooking a deep circular valley known as the Punchbowl by 21 June and conducted operations to extend its control over the area in early September. During the winter of 1951–52 the division continued to hold some 16km (10 miles) of the front line against enemy probes but it was clear that the war was entering a new phase — the large offensives of the past giving way to small-scale actions. In late March the division moved from the Punchbowl area to new positions at the western end of the front, known as the Main Line of Resistance, that covered the main route between Seoul and Pyongyang, the North Korean capital. In mid-August the division successfully beat off an attack against one of its outposts, Bunker Hill, and in October played a similar role in the so-called Battle of the Hook. In March 1953, when Chinese forces attacked three outposts held by the 5th Marines, Reno, Vegas, and Carson, Reno was lost but the marines stubbornly held



Above: There was little change in weaponry for the Marines in Korea — although cold weather clothing was an essential. Here new winter clothing is being tested by a BAR gunner and a .30-cal machine gun team. *US Marine Corps via Real War Photos*



Above: Leathernecks of the 1st Marine Division on the breakout from Chosin, December 1950. They are passing one of the US Army's M-26 Pershing tanks.

TRH Pictures/USMC

Vegas and Carson, suffering some 1,000 casualties. In July, the 7th Marines had a similar successful struggle to hold command posts Berlin and East Berlin. This was almost the last action of the war as on July 27 a truce agreement was signed at Panmunjom.

THE VIETNAM WAR

The division's next major overseas commitment was in the Republic of South Vietnam from 1965 until 1971. The 7th Marines, arriving in June 1965, entered combat first and took part in two operations, *Starlite* and *Piranha*, that marked the first major ground battles fought solely by US forces in South Vietnam. *Starlite*, fought the following 18–21 August, involved the regiment in an attack on a major Vietcong (VC) base at Van Truong, some 24km (15 miles) south

of the air base of Chu Lai. Aided by air strikes and naval bombardment, the marines destroyed the guerrillas in the base, killing more than 650 VC, for the loss of 45 men killed. The division's build up continued over the following months – in March 1966, the headquarters was established at Chu Lai and by June the entire division was ready for operations in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai, the southernmost province in the I Corps Tactical Zone, which covered the northern part of the republic up to the Demilitarized Zone that formed the border with North Vietnam.

For much of the next two years the division was involved in dozens of 'search-and-destroy' missions, aimed at finding and smashing VC units in ICTZ, as well as routine patrol work. By May 1967, the various units had undertaken no less than 44 such operations, including major sweeps such as *Hastings* and *Union I* and *II*. During *Union II* in early June 1967 the 5th Marines in Quang Tin ran into two regiments of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and had to eliminate numerous hidden bunkers. During fighting on the 2nd and 3rd the marines, fighting in the Hiepduc Valley some 48km (30 miles) south-west of Danang, killed some 540 NVA troops, while suffering 73 men killed and 139 wounded themselves.

The division's sternest test came with the wide-ranging Tet Offensive launched in late January 1968. Two NVA regiments took the old imperial city of Hue on the 31st and elements of the division, some 4,000 Marines (two battalions from the 1st and the 5th Marines plus regimental headquarters) of Task Force X-Ray under Brigadier-General Foster Lahue, were ordered from their base at Phu Bai 12km (8 miles) south of the city. On the 31st the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, led a successful push into sections of Hue's New City but the enemy held strong positions both there and in the Old City across the Perfumed River. The 1st and 5th Marines counter-attacked into the New City on 3 February, having to fight from house to house and room to room until the 9th to clear the NVA from their positions. On the 12th, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, helicoptered into the Old City to aid local units in eliminating NVA forces. Again bitter house-to-house fighting ensued until the enemy was destroyed on the 24th. The marines recorded 142 men killed and 857 wounded during the battle but estimated that they had killed some 200 NVA regulars. The 1st Marines again went into action in March and April, helping to open a ground route to the US base at Khe Sanh in Quang Tri province, which had been under siege since the beginning of the Tet Offensive, in Operation Pegasus. Despite successes at Hue and Khe Sanh, the offensive had undermined US commitment to the war and over the following years the war was Vietnamized as American forces staged a gradual withdrawal. The 1st Marine Division departed South Vietnam in April 1971 and returned to Camp Pendleton. However, its involvement in the war had one more act. In

1975, as the republic fell to the North Vietnamese, Camp Pendleton was turned into a reception area for fleeing refugees.

THE GULF WAR AND SOMALIA

Following Iraq's invasion of oil-rich Kuwait on 2 August 1990, President George Bush ordered US forces to Saudi Arabia, and among the first units selected was the 1st Marine Division. For Operation Desert Storm in February 1991, the much-enlarged division was organized into a number of task forces that were to lead the attack against Iraqi positions situated between al Wafra and Umm Gudair oil fields. Task Force Ripper, containing units of the 5th and 7th Marines, was the division's main strike element, while Task Force Papa Bear, containing units of the 1st Marines, was given equipment and training to be able to pierce the enemy's defences. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 7th Marines, were attached to Task Force Grizzly and assigned to protect one of the flanks of the main attack. By January the division was combat ready and early on the morning of 24 February, it drove into southern Kuwait. Against limited opposition Task Force Ripper drove rapidly on Kuwait City and the 7th Marines was one of the first units to enter the capital. As the Iraqis crumbled, the marines pushed northward to the Iraqi border and within 100 hours Kuwait had been liberated.

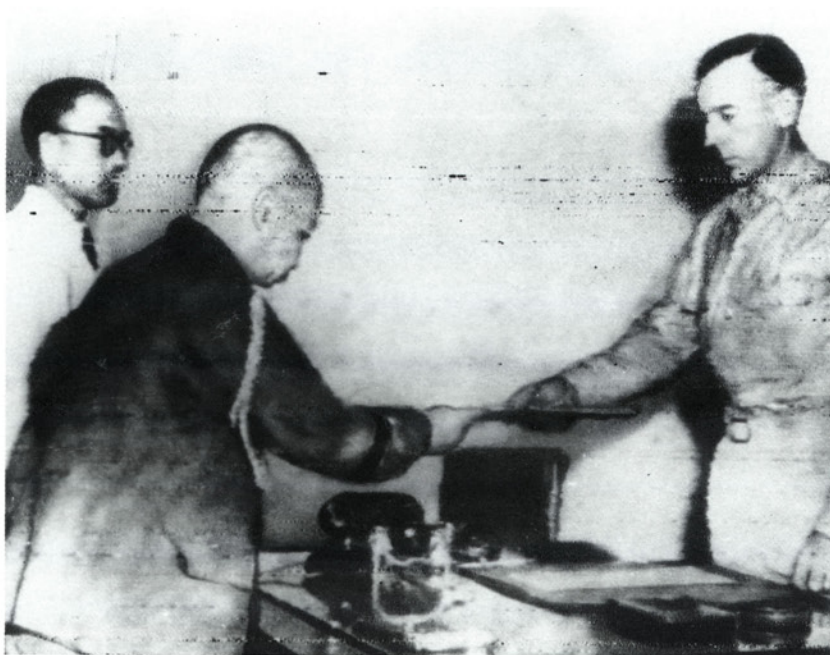
The division's involvement in the Middle East continued in December 1992, when units were committed to Somalia as part of Operation Restore Hope that was designed to bring humanitarian aid to the war-torn East African country. The 7th Marines made an amphibious landing and then moved inland to secure Mogadishu, the country's capital, and protect aid workers. During five months of difficult work, the marines protected food distributors and maintained order, seizing some 5,000 small arms and other weapons. The marines returned to the United States in May 1993, where apart from overseas tours of duty and exercises the division remains today. Its headquarters are at Camp Pendleton, while the 1st Marines are based at Horno, the 5th Marines at San Mateo, the 7th Marines at 29 Palms, and the 11th Marines at Pulgas.

Below: Training for house-to-house fighting in Korea.
US Marine Corps via Real War Photos



ASSESSMENT

Below: General Kawabe, the head of the Japanese surrender delegation, bowing as he presents credentials to General Sutherland during the talks in Manila on 20 August 1945. If it had not been for the surrender the Marines would have had to spearhead the invasion of Japan itself, Operation Downfall. This would have started with Operation Olympic against Kyushu in November 1945 before the invasion of Honshu – Operation Coronet – on 1 March 1946. American planners anticipated over half a million US casualties something that the use of nuclear weapons avoided. *TRH Pictures*



There is no doubt that amphibious warfare is the most complex and dangerous undertaking in military affairs. The task of co-ordinating and integrating land, sea, and air forces into an effective whole is fraught with difficulties and risks, especially if the proposed landing is far from friendly bases and opposed as was the case throughout the Pacific war. That the 1st Marine Division undertook four such successful assault landings during World War II is testimony both to the reliance US military planners placed on it and its fighting abilities, even more so when it is remembered that all were opposed by tenacious Japanese garrisons that in most cases fought to the point of annihilation over a period of weeks or months during which the division was mostly in the front line. The fighting undertaken by the division was also some of the most difficult of the whole war. The Japanese proved masters of close quarter defensive combat and always made excellent use of local terrain, often heavily forested ridges and valleys, to enhance their defensive positions. Even the weather seemed to conspire against the marines – on Guadalcanal, New Britain, and Okinawa heavy rains and the accompanying mud sapped strength and morale, while on Peleliu intense heat and thirst were the major non-combat dangers. Illness and disease were ever present threats that routinely undermined the division's fighting strength.

Guadalcanal, the division's combat debut, was an important turning point in the Pacific theatre. It was the first land battle that Japanese ground forces lost after a string of impressive triumphs and as such was a great boost to Allied morale, one signalling the end of several months of retreat in the face of Japan's Pacific Blitzkrieg. Henceforth the United States held the initiative and step-by-step would reduce Japan's newly won empire. That Guadalcanal was also the first US amphibious assault of the war, organized at breakneck speed, and conducted on a shoestring reflects well on the troops involved. That the 1st Marine Division fought extremely hard for several months, even though its men ran short of all types of military supplies and tropical diseases sapped its strength far more than the enemy, was testimony to its training and the excellent morale of its men, most of whom were recent volunteers with no combat experience. The lessons learned at Guadalcanal, the first occasion any marine

division had been assembled to fight as a whole, proved immensely valuable in refining the principles of large-scale amphibious warfare, which was the core of US strategy during the Pacific campaign.

New Britain was a seemingly small-scale but undoubtedly important campaign to reduce Japan's outer ring of island defences and was a key stepping stone to the final destruction or isolation of the Japanese garrisons in the northern Solomons. The division's successful mission certainly allowed MacArthur to push ahead with his plans to liberate the Philippines. Peleliu remains a controversial battle, with suggestions that the landings were unnecessary. However, grand strategy is not the business of a fighting division – it goes where it is ordered and does what it is told. Okinawa was a savage but ultimately successful battle that, without the dropping of the atomic bombs, would have allowed the United States to launch a massive two-stage amphibious assault on the Japanese home islands. Arguably, then, three of the division's four actions were vitally important stepping stones toward the final defeat of Japan.

At Peleliu, as was later the case on Okinawa, the Japanese changed tactics, dispensing with the beach defences and large-scale counter-attacks that were proving so costly on other islands in the face of overwhelming US firepower. The marines had to learn on the job to deal with these new tactics and adapted with considerable speed and success. The division's troops had to get close to the enemy and neutralize expertly sited bunkers at very short ranges, a situation that often denied them effective support from long-range artillery, warships and aircraft. The marines had first to find the enemy and then destroy him in the face of the ever-present danger of sudden ambush. This was obviously dangerous, nerve-racking work that brought high casualties and played on the nerve of the survivors, yet the 1st Division remained combat-effective in both cases – for some 30 days on Peleliu and for 82 days on Okinawa.

The downside to such commitment as shown at Peleliu and Okinawa was combat exhaustion brought about by casualties and general tiredness. Fighting on islands where the front line was usually ill-defined and there were no truly safe areas meant that relaxation was virtually impossible; alertness at all times was both essential as well as being physically and mentally draining. Consequently, the division usually required long periods for recuperation and the integration of replacements to regain its combat edge. Equally, learning fresh ideas on amphibious warfare and new combat techniques in the light of recent intelligence took time. The 1st Marine Division's experiences bear this out. For example, after Guadalcanal, which it departed in December 1942 after 123 days, the division did not see action for 12 months and after both New Britain (131 days) and Peleliu it was withdrawn for the front line for some five months.

While it is true that the US Army played a significant role in the Pacific War, with some 18 divisions undertaking 26 amphibious assaults, it was the smaller Marine Corps that undertook proportionately more landings, with its six divisions making 15. The marines also paid a high price for their spearhead role. Consisting of just 5 per cent of America's total armed forces during the war, they suffered 10 per cent of its casualties in combat – some 20,000 dead and 67,000 wounded. The 1st Division bore its share of these losses and became the most decorated US unit of the conflict. Aside from individual awards, it was granted three presidential unit citations for its actions on Guadalcanal, Peleliu and Okinawa. As mentioned above, the division, often in need of major rebuilding after a battle, did not fight throughout the whole Pacific war (nor did any other unit) but it could rightly claim that it had been present at the first major US land victory and, by way of New Britain and Peleliu, at the last. The fighting spirit of the division in World War II and later conflicts was summed up by Lieutenant-Colonel Lewis Puller, one of its most famous sons: 'Old Breed? New Breed? There's not a damn bit of difference so long as it's the Marine breed.'

BATTLE LOSSES PALAUS CAMPAIGN

US troops

UNIT	KIA	WIA
1st Marine Div	1,252	5,274
81st Inf Div	540	2,735
US Navy	158	505
TOTAL	1,950	8,514

Japanese troops

LOCATION	KIA
Peleliu	11,000
Anguar and islands	2,600
TOTAL	13,600

GROUND CASUALTIES GUADALCANAL

US troops

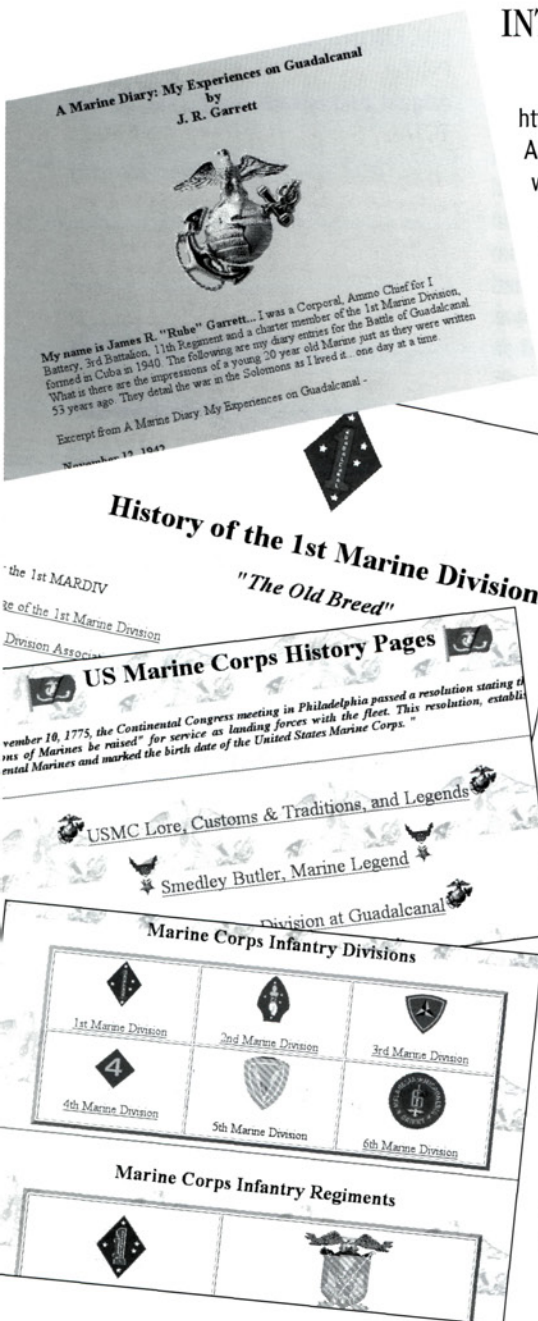
UNIT	KIA	WIA
1st Marine Div	774	1,962
Americal Div	334	850
2nd Marine Div	268	932
25th Inf Div	216	439
TOTAL	1,592	4,283

Japanese troops

Killed or missing	14,800
Died of disease	9,000
Lost at sea	4,346
POW	1,000
TOTAL	29,146

REFERENCE

INTERNET SITES



<http://www.gnt.net/~jrube/intro.html>

A site containing the Guadalcanal diary of Corporal James R. Garrett, who served with the 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines, during the battle.

<http://globalsecurity.org/military/agency/USMC/1mardiv.htm>

Provides a brief overview of the division's history but concentrates on its modern campaigns and deployments. Also has links to pages detailing the division's individual units.

<http://www.grunts.net/usmc/1stmardiv.html>

A brief history of the division that also offers links to the home page of the 1st Marine Division, the 1st Marine Division Association, and personal stories from members of the unit.

<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USMC/USMC-C-opening.html>

A section from the Marines in World War II commemorative series discusses the history of the Corps from the interwar period until the eve of World War II. It includes information on the formation of the 1st Division and, as well as numerous illustrations, also has feature pieces on uniforms and equipment.

<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USMC/USMC-C-Guadalcanal/index.html>

Part of the official Marines in World War II commemorative series that concentrates on the buildup to and course of the action at Guadalcanal. Also contains a wealth of illustrations and box features on marine personalities, equipment, and insignia.

<http://home.sprynet.com/~kier/peleliu.htm>

A site wholly dedicated to the battle for the Pacific island in 1944. It contains a detailed timeline of the campaign, records decorations and commendations, and offers a selection of additional readings. Also details links with other Peleliu sites.

<http://www.peleliu.net/Battle/Battle.htm>

Provides an outline of the battle but also has useful information on the composition and organisation of the division at the time, the Japanese garrison, weapons and equipment, and a range of detailed maps of the action.

<http://www.kmike.com/MarineCorpsKorea/Marines.htm>

A summary of the Marine Corps' involvement in the Korean War, including information of the 1st Division's role in the conflict.

<http://www.1stmarinedivisionassociation.org/>

The official site of the 1st Marine Division Association. Aside from membership details, it provides information on past and present reunions, other association activities, and offers books and other memorabilia for sale. Pages also detail the division's lineage, history and honours.

<http://www.gulfink.osd.mil/histories/db/marines/usmcpersiangulfdoc4-001.html>

Recounts the deployment and operational role of the division during Operations Desert Shield and Storm during the Gulf War of 1990.

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/xBEAR/Peleliu.htm>

Maps and photos: of especial interest in the 1997 after the battle material.

<http://www.navy.mil/navsource.org/archives/10/16idx.htm>

A fantastic resource that gives histories and data on US amphibious warfare craft and from which much of the caption information on landing craft was garnered.

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An overview of the last major amphibious assault of World War II that also contains a number of first-hand accounts from those who fought in the battle.

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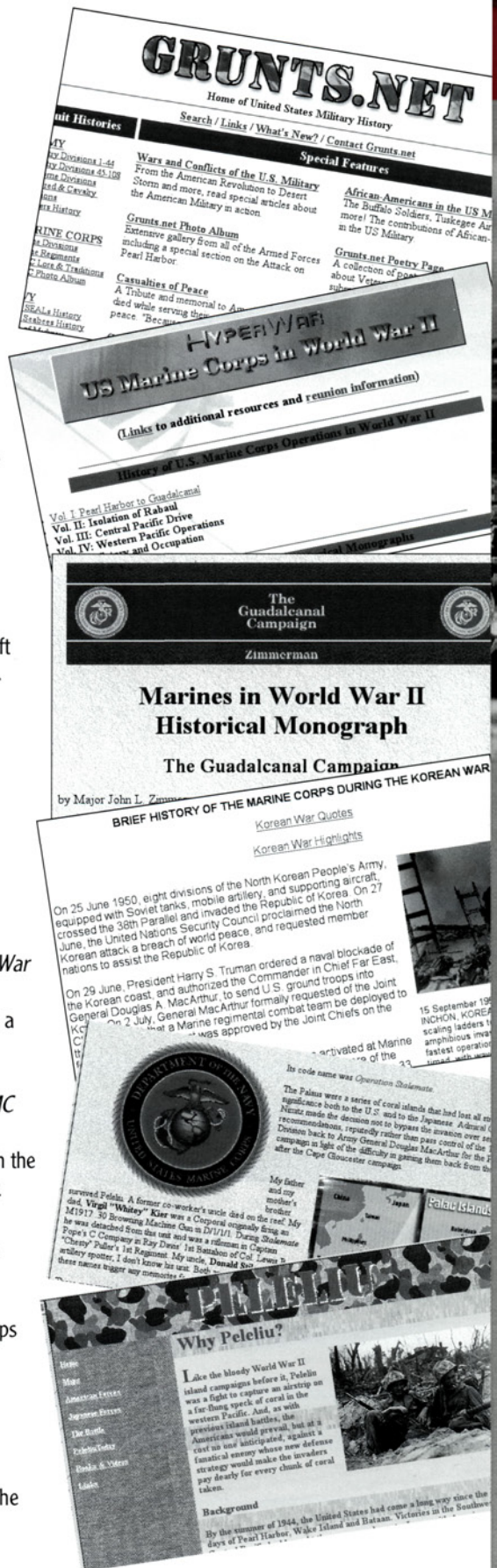
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An invaluable guide to the division's role during the Pacific War, with material on all of its four amphibious assaults.

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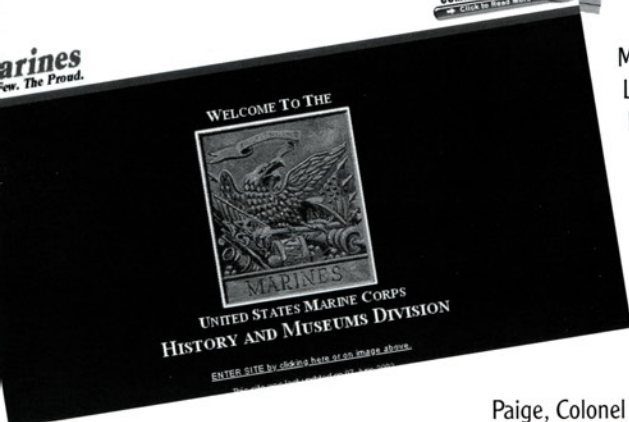
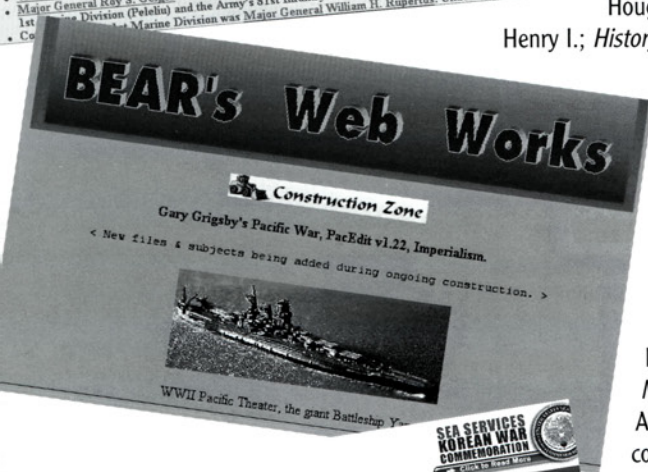
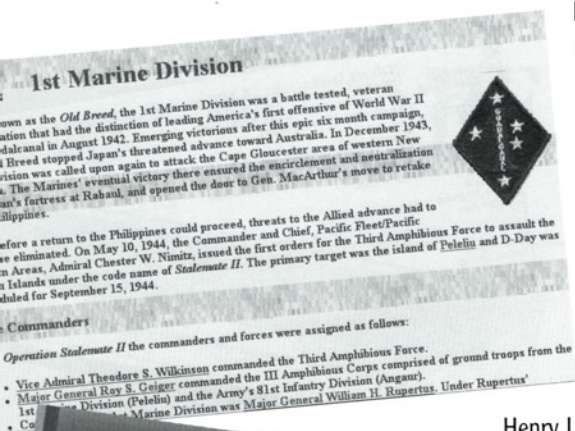
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MEMORIALS

There are several memorials recording battles in which the division took part but perhaps one of the most evocative is the Guadalcanal American Memorial. Situated on Skyline Drive overlooking the town of Honiara, it was a joint venture between the American Battle Monuments Commission and the Guadalcanal-Solomon Islands Memorial Commission. The memorial comprises a central pylon inscribed with the words: 'This memorial has been erected by the United States of America in humble tribute to its sons and its allies who paid the ultimate sacrifice for the liberation of the Solomon Islands 1942-1943.' The pylon is surrounded by four walls, which point to the campaign's four major battle areas and provide details of them.

There are also ongoing projects to complete a memorial at the Las Pulgas chapel in southern California and establish a foundation in memory of Lewis Puller at the Virginia Military Institute.

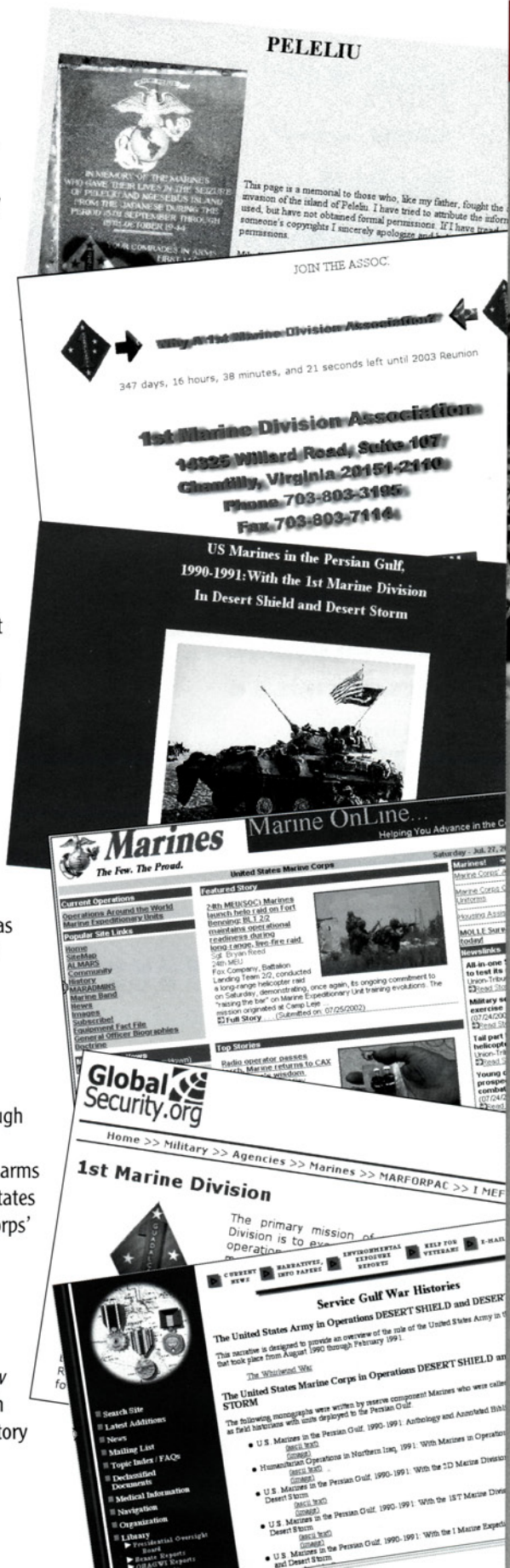
At Peleliu there is a tablet (see website illustration above right) that is inscribed:

'In memory of the Marines who gave their lives in the seizure of Peleliu and Ngesebus islands from the Japanese during the period 13th September through 18th October 1944.

Your comrades in arms
First Marine Division (Reinf) United States
Marine Corps'

FILM

The 1st Marine Division Association has a number of videos available for purchase that focus on the Old Breed's major World War II battles. The 'Marines in World War II' series includes *Palau Operations*, *Guadalcanal/New Britain Operations*, and *Okinawa Operations*. Robert R. McCormick Research Center provides resources for the study of both the division and military history in general. The foundation publishes books and other research sources.



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1st MARINE DIVISION

'The Old Breed'

The United States Marine Corps' 1st Division — 'The Old Breed' — is the oldest, largest and most-decorated division-sized unit in the corps. Divisional regiments first saw service as early as March 8, 1911, when the 1st Marines was formed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, before performing in 15 major engagements during World War I. In World War II the 1st Division was blooded at Guadalcanal, and then went on to fight throughout the entirety of the Pacific campaign. The Pacific War saw some of the most uncompromising warfare in World War II. Each amphibious landing and bloody battle to take the Pacific islands was a small-scale version of D-Day and the USMC was at the heart of the action. The 1st Division would earn three World War II Presidential Unit Citations for its role at Guadalcanal, Peleliu, and Okinawa — each was well deserved.

About the author

Ian Westwell has worked in publishing for more than 15 years and has been a full-time author since 1997. He has contributed to several military books and periodicals, and has most recently written or co-authored *World War 1 Day by Day*, *The Encyclopedia of World War 1* and *In the Path of the Third Reich*. He also wrote *Spearhead 6 1st Infantry Division – the 'Big Red One'*.

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